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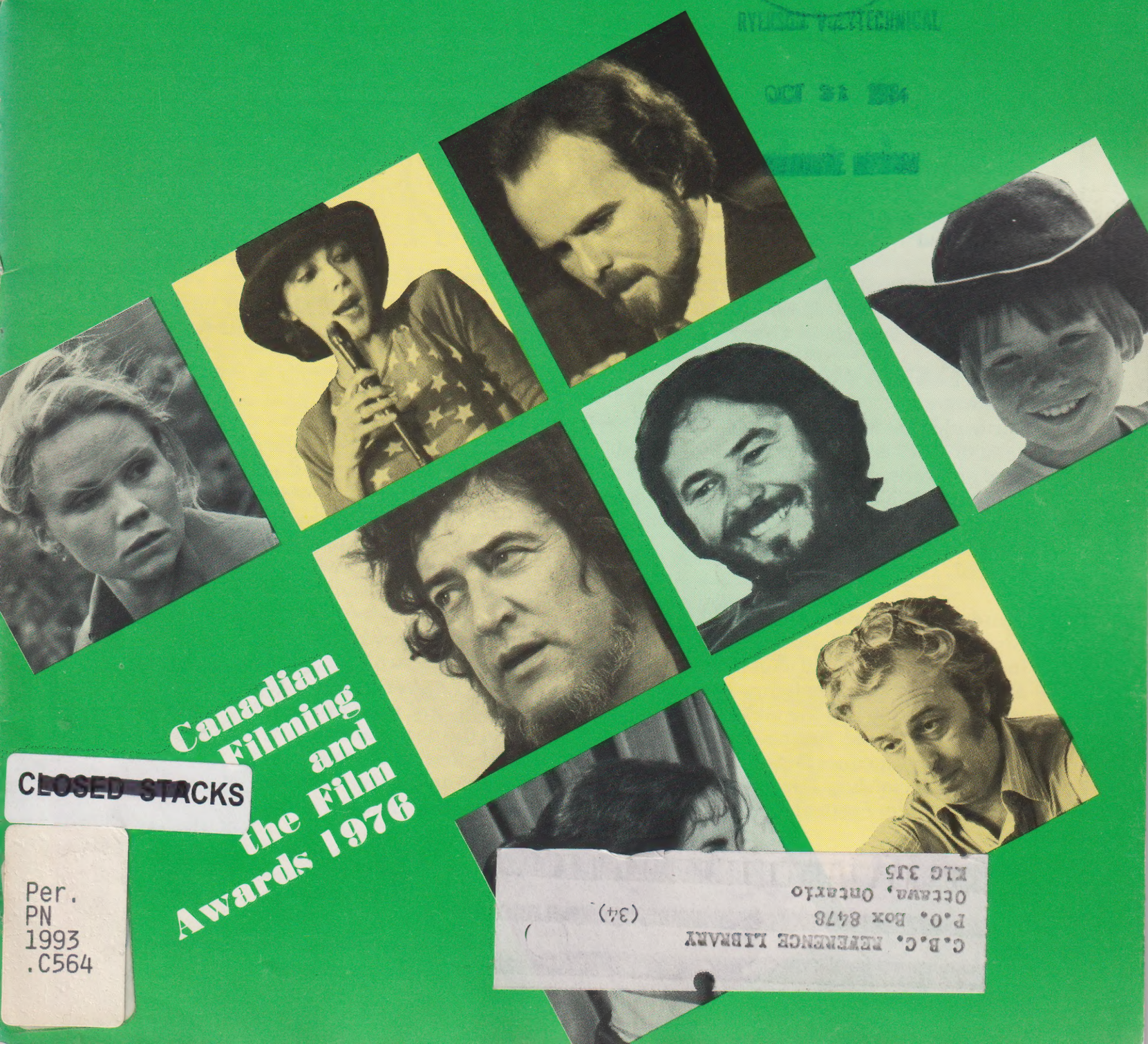

Canadian Filming and the Film Awards 1976

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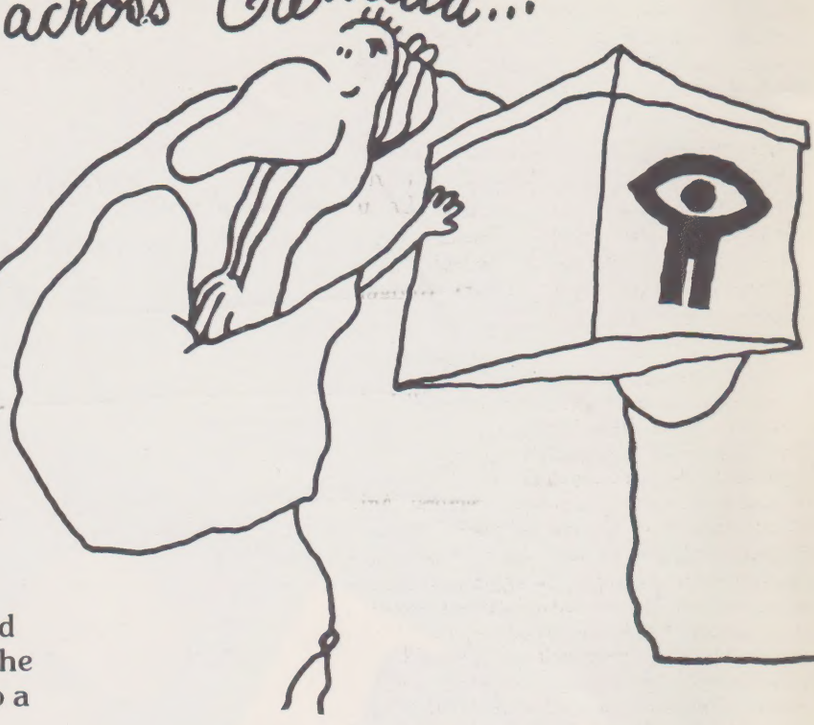

The Street
In soft, simple washes of watercolour and ink, film-maker Caroline Leaf captures the reactions of a St. Urbain Street family to a dying grandmother. From a book by renowned Montreal author Mordecai Richler.
Award: Grand Prize, International Animated Film Festival, Ottawa '76.

Maud Lewis: A World Without Shadows
The world that Maud Lewis created with her paint brushes is one of memorable whimsy — of orchards, oxen, fishermen and flowers. This gentle voyage leads into the tiny house that she decorated entirely with her work and into the peaceful world that she created.

Mindscape/Le paysagiste
Strewn with symbols, fuelled with trancelike images that unfold and shift ceaselessly across the screen, *Mindscape* pulls an artist into his painting and the viewers into the far reaches of his soul. Animated on a *pinscreen* by Jacques Drouin.
Award: Special Jury Prize, International Animated Film Festival, Ottawa '76.

An Old Box
A magical journey with a lonely old man who finds an old box, and within it the chance for a joyous fantasy in line animation. A film for all seasons by Paul Driessen.

The Art of Eating
A rare feast with one of the oldest, most exclusive and most knowledgeable dining clubs in Quebec — if not in the whole of North America. The preparation and presentation of all twelve courses, including the appropriate champagnes and vintage wines, must be seen to be believed.

The Mad Canadian
For the man who rockets a car up a ramp and flys it over a formidable barrier of parked cars, work is a risk that takes more than the desire to earn a living. This tense, tight close-up of stunt man Ken Carter on the stock-car racing track shows what that extra 'something' is.

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National Film Board of Canada
Office national du film du Canada

October 1976
Third Edition, number 31

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Cover

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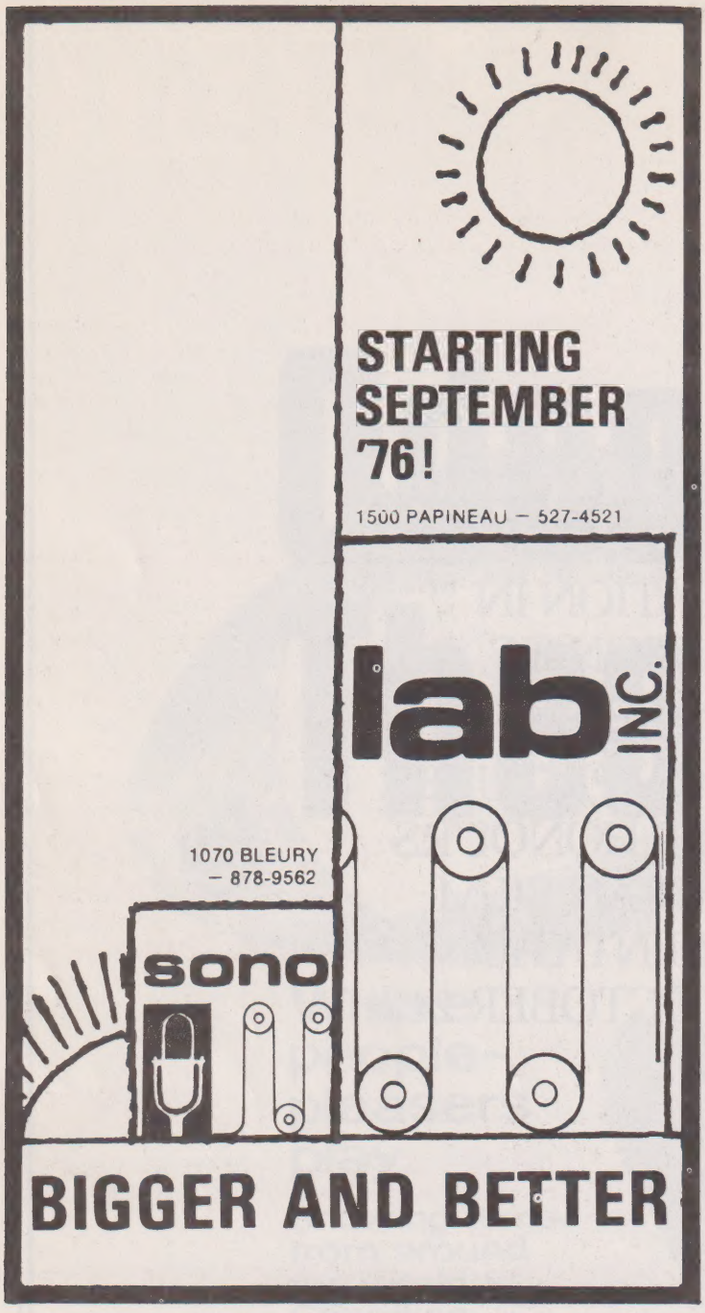
"SECOND WIND"
"LA TETE DE NORMANDE ST. ONGE"



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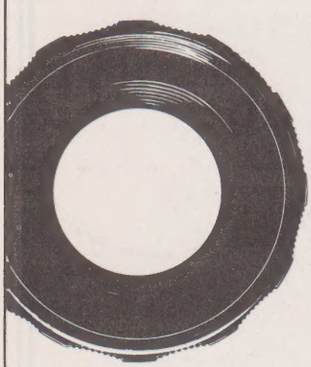


Grants to Ontario Screenwriters

The Ontario Arts Council announces a competition for a limited number of Grants of up to $3,000 each for Ontario writers wishing to create scripts for feature-length dramatic films.

Deadline for Application is December 15, 1976.

Applicants must be Ontario Residents and must submit:

1. Completed Ontario Arts Council Application Forms;
2. A previously completed screenplay to indicate familiarity with the craft of writing for the screen;
3. An outline for the proposed script on which the writer wishes to work with Grant Assistance.

Results of the competition will be announced in early March, 1977.

For Application Forms and additional information contact:

The Film Office
Ontario Arts Council
151 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 1T6
(416) 961-1660

REVERB

Garbled but Kind

Wish to thank N'eema Lakin and **Cinema Canada** for the kind words appearing in your August issue.

Occasionally, words get garbled while passing through the unkempt foliage suspended from my nose, and as a result I would like to correct a minor error. I never taught at the Vancouver School of Art although I attended same.

My comment regarding the animator's role is that the animator is the actor. In many contemporary cartoon films, especially European ones, the idea is all-important rather than character development. Unfortunately, the economics of developing well-rounded cartoon characters are beyond the means of most animation studios.

Enjoyed your various articles on the animation scene across the country and perhaps in future the editors will find space for further articles on this irrational and inexcusable activity. I hope and trust this would not cause a mass exodus of respectable advertisers.

Al Sens

To Rectify an Impression

In the Number 30 issue on pages 41 and 42, in an article on Boxcar Films, the impression is left that Boxcar Films produced the award-winning H. Salt Fish and Chips commercial. In fact, the commercial was created, designed, directed, scripted and edited by Dino Kotopoulis. Boxcar *animated* the film.

Mr. Kotopoulis attended at the office and objected to the impression being left that it was a Boxcar production. He further objects to the use of the photograph, where his only credit is as designer. He is very upset about the implications in the article and has asked us to rectify it.

George Campbell Miller
Barrister

Canadian, Yes. Bitter, No.

Stephen Chesley's concerned report about the cancellation of the Stratford International Film Festival is appreciated, but it is hardly true to say that we "disregarded" Canadian cinema. Just to mention a few of the Canadian films shown, there were **Mon Oncle Antoine, La maudite galette, Réjeanne Padovani, Action, Dreamland, Les ordres, Eliza's Horoscope, Me, Pour le meilleur et pour le pire, Bingo, Metamorphosis, Les mâles** (many receiving their premieres), The Grierson NFB films, and many, many short subjects from the NFB, POCA and independents. There are not many other international festivals which give as much screen time to national films.

As for being bitter, no; disappointed, yes, because Stratford didn't appreciate what it had; but I have been in this profession too long to allow that wasteful emotion to take possession of one's life. There are other plans to make and events to work on.

Gerald Pratley
Director
Ontario Film Institute

Credit to the Conservatoire

To the Editors:

One very important point was not made clear in my interview in **Cinema Canada** no. 29. The Film Festivals Bureau had little to do with the participation of my film **Metamorphosis** at Cannes. It was directly through the efforts of Serge Losique and the Conservatoire d'art cinematographique that my film was in competition.

Interestingly enough, the Conservatoire was also responsible for the success of two student films at Cannes last year. Both Andrew Ruhl's **Pedestrians** and Joyce Borenstein's **Revisited** qualified in the final competition.

All three films mentioned in this letter share one thing in common. They were first seen at the Canadian Student Film Festival. I do not fully understand the workings of the Festivals Bureau but feel that their decision to withdraw support from national student film festivals is a wrong one.

Barry Greenwald

Getting It Straight

I'm rather late getting around to this, but I'd like you to note a correction to your Film News in the June/July issue. You mention the TVO themed evening on native peoples in which you say "... concluding with **To Walk With Dignity,** a commentary from the Indian point of view by Duke Redbird." Duke was, in fact, the writer, and **To Walk With Dignity** was both produced and directed by me. I realize that you published your information from a TVO press release, and I have called them to set the record straight.

If it's of interest to you, I'm presently producing a number of films on local control of Indian education at the Fort Alexander reserve in Manitoba. If you'd like any information, please give me a call.

Tony Snowsill
Direction Films

Erratum

In issue no. 31 of Cinema Canada, the last sentence of Harry Gulkin's article First of All, Respect, *was altered in such a way as to seriously distort Mr. Gulkin's original text. Our apologies to the author. The sentence should have read, "Our industry will not command the respect, will not command the support which it deserves from the people of Quebec if it becomes a particularly exploitative branch of industry in this country." The sentence had been altered ro read, "... by remaining among the most exploitative branches of industry...". Ed.*

Nota Bene:

In issue no. 29 of ***Cinema Canada****, p. 41, a letter from Jerry Bruck to the organizers of the Ontario Film Association Showcase was published. As this letter had been sent to all the film directors who attended the Grierson Seminar, and was considered by this magazine to be in the public domain, no permission was requested from Mr. Bruck to reprint his letter.*

He has since notified ***Cinema Canada*** *that the letter was strictly personal. Our apologies to Mr. Bruck and to the Ontario Film Association for any embarrassment caused by the publication of said letter.* – **Ed.**

Astral Films Limited

salutes the 1976 Canadian Film Awards
and is proud to distribute two of the feature films under consideration for awards

Our congratulations to:

Harry Gulkin, producer of

LIES MY FATHER TOLD ME

G. Chalmers Adams, producer of

Partners

For 1977, our exciting Canadian releases include:

THE LITTLE GIRL WHO LIVED DOWN THE LANE —
starring Jodie Foster, Martin Sheen, Alexis Smith, Scott Jacoby

RITUALS —
starring Hal Holbrook, Lawrence Dane, Ken James, Robin Gammell, Gary Reineke

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT —
starring Dan Aykroyd, Mary Ann McDonald, Jane Mallett, George Murray, Barry Morse

The Canadian Film Awards?

"Going to be great!"

– Nat Taylor

THE ILLUSTRATED NEWS

THE WEATHER

Very uncertain but getting colder

Vol. 1, no. 1 November 1976

From a small stage in Ottawa to a nationally televised awards presentation, the Canadian Film Awards have come a long way. If you know just how far, see our quiz on page 31.

FESTIVAL FEVER TAKES HOLD OF TORONTO

Moviegoers in Toronto hardly knew which way to turn with the Festival of Festivals and the Canadian Film Awards competing with each other for their time, loyalty and entrance tickets. Both festivals began on Oct. 18 and though public screenings for the CFA ended on Oct. 21, those of the F of F ran until Sunday Oct. 24 at which time the CFA started up again with its awards presentation, broadcast coast to coast at 10 pm by CTV.

As if the festivals weren't enough, the Ontario Censorship Board added to the excitement by refusing to allow **Partners** by Don Owen to be seen without cuts and neither the director nor the producer were of a mind to cut. So the program changes began and the publicity flared.

There was also the last minute rumor that Nat Taylor was ready to resign as president of the CFA because of the pressure put on the Awards to refuse the Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association the right to give away its new Golden Reel Award to the film which made the greatest commercial impact over the year. This, added to the already heavy lobbying to get **Lies My Father Told Me** by Jan Kadar disqualified as a non-Canadian movie, heated up the atmosphere to boiling. The scene was set for another momentous Canadian Film Awards.

C. T.

Cinema Canada *thanks Stephen Chesley (Toronto) and Fiona Jackson (Vancouver) who have contributed to this month's* Illustrated News, *and encourages others to send newsworthy items and pictures to the magazine.*

Bill C58 Still Hanging In

(S.C.) – Bill C58 continues to make ripples, if not waves. Eighteen U.S. senators, including Hubert Humphrey, drew up a bill to ban Canadian films, TV, and records, even jingles, from the U.S. if Bill C58 is put into effect by Sauvé. And Henry Kissinger was asked to join negotiations (Why is a Bill that is already law still being negotiated?). All of which was reported in the Toronto Star American wire service story. Bill Marshall of the Canadian Association of Motion Picture Producers sent a letter to Kissinger asking for the ban on Canadian features, because then Canadians could really deal a death blow to the American film industry, considering all the features shown there. Not to mention the 40 million dollars Americans remove from our broadcast industry every year via our spending on American programming.

There was a surprise development, however, and it came as a proposal from the Canadians. The owners of the U.S. border TV stations, who could lose $20 million in annual revenue, would set up a production fund for Canadian producers of $5 million (that leaves $15 million). The money would go to produce programming which, because of American cash, could even receive a stronger sell to U.S. networks or syndication. And give Canadian producers clout with investors. And probably create another branch plant for U.S. production. The proposal was accepted by Capital Cities Broadcasting, Wometco, Taft Broadcasting. On this side were the CFTA, CAMPP, and a new Animation Producers' Association.

Wasington-based negotiations indicate a watering down, even though the bill has been declared operative.

Things Are Slow in B.C.

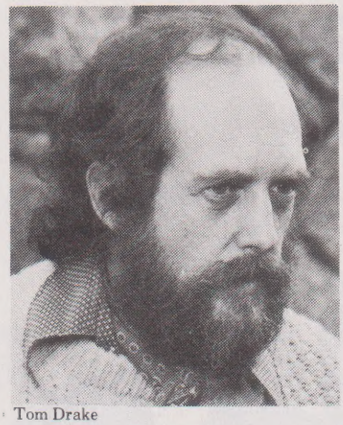
Vancouver – (F.J.) – The sun is shining on through an Indian summer – if you have to be unemployed, now is as good a time as any. The promise of the spring has not been fulfilled either in the weather or the work of the summer. The movie **Jocasta,** based on the legend of Oedipus, was in pre-production in Williams Lake for weeks. That shoot now changed directors and moved to Montreal. Fran Rosati has gone with it as production manager and Keith Pepper as art director. The original production manager Bob Gray is now working as locations manager on **Equus** in Toronto.

Death Hunt, an ABC Movie of the week, was wrapped up here with some shooting, mainly second unit, to be picked up around Los Angeles. Mike Connors of *Mannix* fame starred and it employed a lot of local actors.

Zale Daalen is shooting his low-budget CFDC feature **Skip Tracer** from his own original screenplay. Zale will also edit the film, which was produced by Laara Daalen.

Keith Cutler filmed his 11th film for the US Roman Meal Bread Company. What started as a simple sales motivation film 11 years ago has since become a soaper ' the first order with the same character remaining from the first one and evolving from callow youth to a high of supervisor this year. A new callow youth (Mario Crudo) was hired this year, and who knows what might happen in the next 11?

As usual, BC film people and crews are busy in Alberta this autumn. Some of them have done so many features there their accents are beginning to change.



Tom Drake

CBC is in production of a series with Mike Neun.

BCTV / CTV are shooting scenes from two pilots in an interesting experiment. Shot on videotape on location with the new RCA camera and lit by Harry Makin, the object is to find out if it's possible to shoot a series that way. Stanley Olsen directed both with scripts from Tom Drake, using Anna Hagan, Zoe Alexander, Ian Tracey, Janne Mortil and Elizabeth Barclay in one whose lead is Neil Dainard; and Lally Cadeau and Barney O'Sullivan in the other with Neil Munro the male lead. Hopes are high that one or the other will sell as a series.

There was a rumored UK/Canada co-production and there still is (a rumor, that is).

WNET/13, the New York educational TV station, was planning a shoot here based on a Coastal Indian legend. It was to be part of a series in which US theatre companies are used. No word yet on a definite starting date. It looks unlikely at this point.

Pattie Robertson is working as production manager on a pool of Sony commercials for the Japanese market with Japanese crew and L.A. production house.

Pay-TV: The Latest

(S.C.) – Two pay-TV developments have hit the government and broadcast industry hard. First there was a press conference called by representatives of 220 cultural organizations from across the country calling for a halt to the introduction of pay-TV until further studies are made, and castigating the government for not making the hearings by the CRTC open to the public. Next came a brief from the CBC opposing pay-TV at this time.

In other words, nobody except the cable companies wants it yet. Communications Minister Jeanne Sauvé is furious with her mandarins for allowing such a public outburst of disapproval, but hasn't announced any postponement.

All of which ties in with current ennui at the CRTC. Since Pierre Juneau's departure, Sauvé's department has been making a concerted effort to assume some CRTC power; the CRTC comes under the Secretary of State. A top researcher is leaving the CRTC and staff morale is at rock-bottom, caused not only by Sauvé's assault, but also by recent court battles and public outcry against the CRTC's Canadianization and bilingual broadcasting availability policies.

Censored?

(C.T.) Astral Films Ltd. of Montreal was relieved when the Cinema Supervisory Board gave an exhibition visa to Oshima's erotic **Empire of the Senses.** Banking on the film's projected sensation at the N.Y. Fest, Astral had started to count its chickens only to see the hen removed. In N.Y., the film never showed. Seems that U.S. customs changed its mind about the appropriateness of letting the film across the border. Hoping to avoid controversy, the CSB advised Astral that it would be wise to withhold the film's exhibition until the furor died down. It did not, however, rescind the film's visa.

Which leaves Astral in a bind, the film on the shelf, and a public anxious to see the film which caused the biggest controversy at Cannes last year, and which was thought to be – critically – one of the best films there.

Production News from Ontario

Paramount Canada to co-produce

Farley Mowat's **A Whale for the Killing** may become a co-production of the Canadian subsidiary of Paramount Pictures and the ABC-TV network and qualify as a Canadian film with Canadian investors. Harvey Hart would direct, James Margellos would produce if production, scheduled for next spring in Newfoundland, takes place. Originally set for this fall, the pic was postponed because ABC's American star choices were unsuitable to the Canadian side. Paramount has an option on another Canadian novel as well.

At Kleinburg

Kleinburg Studios outside Toronto is gaining acceptance as a feature site. Currently shooting is Sidney Lumet's feature of **Equus,** with Richard Burton. Aside from co-lead Peter Firth, the rest of the cast is Canadian, and includes Kate Reid, Ken James, Neil Dainard, David Gardner, Patricia Hamilton, Sabena Maydell, Elva Mai Hoover, Sean McCann, James Hurdle, and John Friesen. Casting was by Clair Walker in Toronto... Leon Uris' **Trinity** may also be done at Kleinburg next year... And Peter Sasdy, who made **Welcome to Blood City** there this summer, plans to return next year. **Blood City** is set to open in Toronto next March.

Kramreither sells

Producer Tony Kramreither informs us he's sold two films, and plans to produce a feature this fall and one next spring.

Lions for Breakfast has been sold to Bob Hope's distribution arm, Epoh Releasing, and opened in 45 theatres in the U.S. on October 1. Four hundred play dates have been scheduled... **A Sweeter Song,** by Alan Eastman, will open in Canada in November, to be distributed by Ambassador, and talks are under way with Epoh about it too.

Scheduled for a fall shoot, with Ambassador and Famous Players among the investors, is **Deadly Harvest,** a 'tense drama' set in the future and concerning what happens after an unsuccessful harvest results in a food shortage. Martin Lager wrote the script, Bob Brooks will handle camera, and a director and stars are still to be found. The pic will be shot north of Toronto.

Lions for Breakfast

In planning stages is a feature to be shot in late winter or early spring. **In Council Rooms Apart** is a novel by John Craig, who will handle the script with William Davidson. Budget will be $1.6 million, and it will be an international co-production.

Kramreither will do the producing chores on both upcoming projects.

Other movie plans

In planning stages are a film of Robertson Davies' **Fifth Business,** optioned by former United Artists vice-president Herb Jaffe and writer-director Nicholas Meyer for future production. Don Shebib will do a profile of sportswriter Ted Reeve for CBLT TV... David Cronenberg is preparing **Rabid,** a new horror flick for Cinepix... Jack Webb is still trying to make an RCMP series for U.S. TV, and says he's closer than ever...

Writer-director Jim Blacker, who was A.D. on **Recommendation for Mercy,** is promoting **Nothing to Lose,** a prison drama based on the Steinhauser case in B.C. His budget is $535,000 and he intends to shoot this fall without CFDC investment.

Both Gilles Carle and Denis Héroux are planning to do their next features in English... René Simard, Québec's boy pop star, has become the first child star to sign a contract with 20th Century-Fox in Hollywood since Shirley Temple. Plans are to star him in **Hassle.** About a Quebec youth and an older man on the go, with production next spring.

S.C.

U. of Windsor Broadcasting Report

(S.C.) – Another report concerns the broadcast industry, and was prepared by communications professor Hugh Edmunds and his University of Windsor staff.

Commisioned by the federal Communications Department, the report recommends that a specific period of prime time be set aside for Canadian shows, extra money should be made available for CTV and the CBC to purchase from private industry, the CRTC should study the formation of an ad-hoc third network, made up of Global, Hamilton's CHCH and western independents, a government lending agency should be set up to help private industry, and foreign sales should be tax-exempt and producers should get credit for any foreign taxes paid. The report notes that of 96 'private' shows in the past season, only twenty-two were truly independent. And it raps CTV's knuckles for doing too little Canadian work.

It's interesting that Edmunds, a private consultant, urges public and private power in TV, while bureaucrat Tompkins wants the private industry to take over the job.

Chaos in Quebec

Montreal (C.T.) - The confusion and inertia which handicap the Direction générale du cinéma et de l'audiovisuel are making inroads in other sectors of the industry as well. The producers complain bitterly about the do-nothing attitude of the DGCA and have seen the production of government-sponsored films fall off by 60% compared to last year.

Recently, the Cinémathèque québécoise closed its vaults because its annual subsidy from Quebec was not forthcoming. Although the DGCA insists that it offered the Cinémathèque several service contracts which amount to $72,000 the Cinémathèque needs to assure its operating budget before accepting the additional tasks which the service budgets would entail.

The above reflects the situation at the DGCA which still – after almost a year and a half – has only an interim general director, Mr. Gérard Lajeunesse. Although Robert Bastien had been chosen for the post and for six months held the title "directeur-général-adjoint", personality conflicts with Lajeunesse, who is also deputy under-minister at Communications, led to his removal.

Three of the four department heads (administration, distribution and production) are also still temporary. The latter, Jacques Parent, production, has just been declared unqualified to fill his post by the provincial civil service. The fourth, Romuald Miville-Deschênes at the Cinémathèque nationale, was appointed by Bourassa and needn't submit his candidature to the civil service.

The Illustrated News als Festivals Festivals Festi

CNE Film Competition held in Toronto

Held in mid-August was the Third Annual CNE Film Competition, in Toronto, under the Women's Division of the Canadian National Exhibition. The winners, made by post-secondary students, were shown on Youth and Education Day. Over 60 entries were viewed by judges Tess Taconis, Vaclav Taborski, Gerald Pratley, Bruce Pitman, Jeff Paule and Harvey Honsberg. Grand Prize Winner and first in the Animation Category ($1000 from Famous Players) was **The Pit and the Pendulum** by Neil Warren. Richard Dobrucki of Mohawk College received $250 from Odeon for Second in Animation for **Step by Step.** Best Documentary ($500 from FP) was **A Minute and a Half** by Dominique Lacasse of Algonquin College. Best Experimental was John Bertram's **Sonauto** ($500 from FP) and Second was Richard Davis' **Watercolour** ($250 from Odeon). F.K. Hochheim received $500 from FP for Best Scenario for **Plurality of Vibratory Circumstances;** Odeon gave $250 to Jerry Ciccoritti of York for Second Scenario for **Feuille d'Album,** and Braun gave $100 for Third Scenario to Kenneth Ilass for **Temporarily Confused.** Honorable mention went to John Weshesuer for photography in **Temporarily Confused;** Richard Dobrucki for photography in **There Was a Time;** Gary Zubeak for his film **Weekend Warriors;** John Bertram for the music in **Sonauto;** Lawrence Fagan for his film **Reflections of the Past;** and to the Humber College Film Department for **Ram.**

Recent festivals

The Atlantic Filmmakers' Co-op, in co-operation with the Festival of the Arts presented at Dalhousie in Halifax in August, presented Films by Four Halifax Filmmakers: Brett, Livingston, Pearse and Simmons... The Third Annual Alberta Film Festival was held in Edmonton from September 20 to 22. Sponsored by the Alberta Motion Picture Industries Association and the government's Department of Industry and Tourism, the fest featured works by Alberta producers, both feature and short, and fest chairman was AMPIA director Don Reed... The Second International Festival of Women's Films was held in New York from September 13 to 26, and featured screenings, a conference and panels.

Film Festivals Bureau head Jean Lefebvre was a juror at the Locarno Festival this summer... Michael Snow attended the Edinburgh Festival for a conference on avant-garde film wherein he appeared on a panel.

The Art Gallery of Ontario presented a seven-program History of the American Avant-Garde Cinema during September and October. The programs were selected by John G. Hanhardt of New York's Witney Museum, and the travelling series was organized by the American Federation of Arts.

Red Cross looking for festival entries

The Canadian Red Cross Society is looking for health films to enter on behalf of Canada for Varna II, a Festival of Health Films to be held in Varna, Bulgaria next June. Contact the Red Cross head office in Toronto or the SOS Film Festivals Bureau. A Canadian winner at the first fest was the NFB's **La faim,** so 'Health' is obviously defined rather loosely.

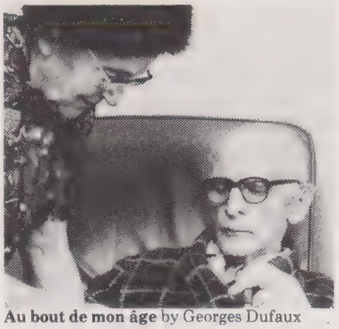
On the future festival horizon...

Coming up are the 6th International Film Festival of Nature, Man and his Environment in Padova, Italy, from November 29 to December 1; the 11th Teheran Children's Film Festival from October 31 to November 5th; the 5th International Teheran Film Festival from November 21 to December 5, featuring 22 features, 22 shorts, a festival of festivals, a market, and retrospectives; the 12th Chicago Festival November 5-18; the Virgin Islands International Film Festival November 12-21, usually showing many Canadian entries; The U.S. TV Commercials Festival with awards to be presented in Chicago on November 18. Further information regarding these events can be obtained from the Film Festivals Bureau, Room 1709, 66 Slater Street, Ottawa K1A 0M5.

S.C.

L'Age et la Vie

(CT) – An important film festival took place in Montreal from Oct. 17 to 22. "It's not a festival about old people or for old people. It's about people who are getting older," comments Guy L. Coté, the prime mover of the festival. Over the six day period, 29 films from 12 countries were shown to the general public at Ciné-Centre.



Au bout de mon âge by Georges Dufaux

The festival is part of a campaign organized by the movement "Age and Life" to change people's attitudes toward the elderly. Besides the film festival, *L'âge et la vie* held multi-disciplinary round-tables to analyse the aging process, held an exhibition of children's drawings of old people and held "information days" to awaken interest in the aged. Mr. Coté comments, "Cinema is a political act and the festival hopes to resituate the political debate where it counts: in the heart of each man.

La faim by Peter Foldes

The CBC Presents...

After the flap last spring, the CBC went into a corner and, lo and behold, re-scheduled **Nellie McClung,** and has signed, of course, Kate Reid to play the lead... *King of Kensington* writer-producer Jack Humphrey performed the same chores on a TV adaptation of his radio show *Travels With Aunt Jane,* starring Jane Mallett and directed by André Brassard... The CBC Music Department will co-produce *The Music of Man,* six one-hour shows costing one million dollars in budget. Others producing are TV-Ontario and the Mississipi Authority for Educational TV. Starring Yehudi Menuhin, the series idea was initiated by CBC music chief John Barnes, who will also co-ordinate the project. Concerning the historical role and impact of music on Western society, the series will begin broadcast in 1979. New and existing film will be used.

Features Winding Up

(S.C.) – Fall is also completion time, and **Summer Rain** is now editing. **Who Has Seen the Wind?** has been completed in Saskatchewan, with a cast under director Allan King that included much of Canadian actordom: Gordon Pinsent, Helen Shaver, Donnely Rhodes, Charmion King, David Gardner, Chapelle Jaffe, Patricia Hamilton, Gerard Parkes, Sandy Webster, Ed McNamara, Tom Hauff, Cedric Smith, Nan Stewart, and American Jose Ferrer. The four youngsters are all from the Regina area, found by King's wife Patricia Watson after a talent search.

Also complete is **The Hunter,** a cheapie filmed sans CFDC participation near Arnprior. It's a psychological thriller about a teenager who finds he's hunting humans, not animals. The cast includes Richard Greenblatt, David Craig, Rachel John, and the executive producer is Wayne Aaron.

Echoes from Ontario

In the steps of Marco Polo...

Not content to avoid selling Ontario-made movies in Ontario, a blue-ribbon group set off for the exotic Far East to promote movies made in Ontario. Tokyo, Hong Kong and Sydney were stopping points for distributor Charles Chaplin, producer Ralph Ellis, and distributor Sam Jephcott. Heading the entourage was civil servant Peter Skinner of the Ministry of Trade and Commerce.

International Film Distributors head Charles Chaplin also went to China, at that government's request, and sold two features – old U.S. films **Young at Heart** and **Gentle Giant** – and eyed several Chinese shorts to bring over here. He said the Chinese wanted our stuff for study and archival use, and will be buying more. China has purchased half a dozen NFB shorts, the features **Kamouraska** and **Pour quelques arpents de neige,** and will view 300 more Canadian efforts. First sales to the Teeming Millions.

Around the province...

The Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre supplied Toronto's Harbourfront with several film programs... Filympics Canada was held for five days in August at the Windsor Public Library. Highlights were features, including **Between Friends, A tout prendre, Sudden Fury, Wedding in White** and **Cry of the Wild,** as well as a panel with Don Shebib, Bill Fruet, Ben Caza and Garth Jowett.

Broadcast notes...

Global TV expects to show a profit for the fiscal year ending August 31, 1977, the first for the network recently almost bankrupt. And parent company IWC Communications wants to buy out the other Global partners (Global Ventures Western, Seymour Epstein, Gurston Rosenfeld) and merge them with IWC.

And *The Toronto Star,* the country's richest newspaper, is expanding its communications further, by a recent rush to buy a substantial, but not controlling, interest in Western Broadcasting, as well as an outright buy of Neilsen-Feras production company.

S.C.

awards, kudos, appointments et al

MPI picks up travel film award

William Rhodes' MPI Productions of Toronto received a Gold Cindy Award at the 17th Annual Cindy Award presentations in Palm Springs on October 2nd. The award for best travel film went to the firm's Come-in-From-Away, made for the Prince Edward Island Ministry of Tourism. Rhodes directed and produced, Jim Mercer was cameraman, Doug Scott wrote it, Jack Schoon was editor and Paul Grady did the music.

Saskatoon's Lumby Productions receives Czech award

Forest in Our Hands picked up its fourth award (previous kudos were at New York, Los Angeles and Chicago) at Techfilm 75, held in Prague, and last month the Lumbys, who made it, and Nolan Matthies of the Saskatchewan Government Department of Renewable Resources and Tourism, who sponsored it, travelled to Ottawa for the formal presentation. Pic was best film in the category Forestry and Related Subjects.

ACTRA takes CBC to court

Some two years ago writer Rod Langley was commissioned to adapt his play on Norman Bethune for CBC TV Front Row Centre. Donald Sutherland was hired to play the lead and production is currently under way. However the CBC allowed a Sutherland-chosen American writer to make the script 'more cinematic', which Langley agreed to and which was done. Langley then learned that the writer had fashioned an entirely new script, and, although Langley was paid for his efforts, he brought the weight of ACTRA to bear on the CBC because he wanted his work used at least as a basis. The CBC, as I write, is appearing in the Supreme Court of Ontario to fight an ACTRA injunction request against the show, now in rehearsal. ACTRA is also miffed because of the spectre of the CBC going to the U.S. again (after Nellie McClung) and wants a public brouhaha over the matter. High drama.

Editors' Guild meets to discuss unionization

The Canadian Film Editor's Guild met in Toronto on September 29 to discuss formation of a union (as opposed to current status which has no force in law). Representatives of IATSE, NABET, CFTA, and ACTRA appeared on a panel. The discussion is continuing among members, but one idea brought up was a union consisting of editors, soundmen and cameramen.

Lonsdale new Chief News Editor at CBC

Cliff Lonsdale, 31, is the new Chief News Editor for the CBC. He moves up from Executive Producer of the National News 11 pm broadcast... No replacement for Lloyd Robertson as of this writing.

Kudos and official recognitions

The dinner held in Toronto to honour Budge Crawley raised $1530 for the Variety Club... The Canadian Picture Pioneers named veteran Lionel Lester as Pioneer of the Year, and he was honoured at a dinner November 1st. Also honoured were William Devitt of Ontario, Romeo Goudreau of Quebec, Barry Myers of Manitoba and Dawson Exley of B.C.... Toronto Star movie critic Clyde Gilmour received an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree at the Fall Convocation of McMaster University in Hamilton.

Famous Players profit up again

Famous Players profit for the nine months ending March 31 was $10.4 million, with film providing $3.9 million of that. That makes up 75% of parent company Canadian Cablesystems' profit.

McPherson appointed to Grierson Chair

Dr. Hugo McPherson has been appointed to the John Grierson Chair of Communications at McGill University. McPherson is a former Government Film Commissioner (1967-70) and the chair recognizes that Grierson spent his last years in Canada at McGill, where a Grierson Archives is being established in conjunction with Sterling University in Scotland...

Random notes

Insight Productions had two TV showings within five days of each other, one on each network. First came Toller, on CTV October 23, an hour effort focussing on the skater. Then CBC Teleplay broadcast Insight's first drama, written and directed by Pen Densham and produced by John Watson. It was a co-production half-hour called If Wishes Were Horses, and starred Jackie Burroughs, Hugh Webster and Gary Reineke. Date was October 28... The Far Shore held up well in its Toronto opening, matching the performance of Lies My Father Told Me and Seven Beauties. Pic will be released in Ontario prior to Christmas and the rest of the country after the new year... Rumours are floating amongst the Toronto smog re a takeover bid for CITY TV, the local independent TV outlet. Current shareholders deny such events could take place.

in and out of the movies

gerald pratley

When Adolph Zukor died this year at the magnificent age of 103, none of the tributes and assessments of his career published in Canadian newspapers (which, running true to form, were simply picked up from their US sources) mentioned the fact that the once-aggressive and all-powerful Zukor was one of the architects of our present misfortunes in motion picture production.

Our limited histories tell of Mr. Zukor's entry into exhibition in Canada with Paramount's Famous Players company, how he bought up the cinemas and put out of business those exhibitors who resisted him, by simply building a bigger cinema next to them.

With the entire production of the Hollywood studios available to him, he swept across the country and starved of their movies and their audiences those who would not sell. Those few who did resist lost everything, as there was nothing Zukor wanted once he built his own cinemas. Former independent theatre owners then went to work for him.

The federal and provincial governments of the time didn't care, not understanding the importance of a Canadian presence on the motion picture screens. Politicians considered a few short subjects as being sufficient and proper Canadian participation in the somewhat vulgar business of film production.

It's interesting to pause and reflect what the outcome for Canadian filmmakers might have been had our cinemas not fallen under American domination. (By the time Odeon came on the scene, the damage had already been done.) In the absence of government regulations on quotas and levies, there would have been little difference. Exhibitors the free world over are all alike. They play films which are easy to come by, familar to audiences, and most likely to make them wealthy. American films fulfilled these requirements, and anything domestic was dull and suspect.

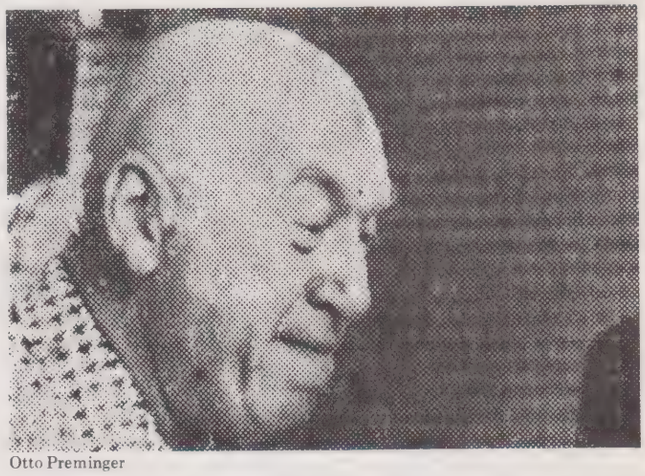
Even if there had never been a circuit called Famous Players, but one under a different name wholly owned by Canadians, it would probably have shown mostly American movies, or those coming through American distributors, and shunned Canadians programs – just as the cinema's present-day equivalent, the television station, prefers to do. If all the distributing companies had remained Canadian and all the cinemas had remained under Canadian control, with each working together to present the best films from all producers, including Canadians, what would the situation be like today? Would our filmmakers have risen to the need? Would our 'expatriates' have stayed home?

What effect in social, political, and psychological terms would this have had on audiences, who now, as a result of 75 years of American films, know the USA and its habits, history, places and procedures, better than their own? We can hardly blame Zukor for all this, of course, because we let it happen – in the name of free enterprise!

It's of little use to wonder about what might have been. Now it is too late; but with pay-TV and the large-screen TV system around the corner heralding the demise of cinemas as mass media, we could make a new beginning by learning from the past. But no one should bank on it!

●

Otto Preminger was in Gravenhurst to attend the opening of the Norman Bethune House as an historic monument, and to see Carol Bolt's play, **Dr. Norman Bethune On Board the S.S. Empress of Asia.** For more than three years Mr. Preminger, being fascinated by the story of the remarkable Canadian doctor, has been trying to raise the money in Canada to make a film (from Rod Stewart's book) on location in British Columbia. Bearing in mind that the Saskatchewan



Otto Preminger

government has invested heavily in Alan King's film of **Who Has Seen the Wind?**, might not the BC government be inclined to follow its example? Or was Dr. Bethune of the wrong political stripe? Preminger has Donald Sutherland in mind to play Bethune.

●

Motion pictures have come to be accepted as part of the arts,. but time and time again they are omitted from matters relating to the arts. At a discussion of the responsibilities of the critic, held at the National Arts Centre recently, no film critics from Canada or elsewhere appear to have been invited. If they were, they either said nothing or the reporters for the newspapers considered them unworthy of being mentioned.

●

When a group of irate US senators proposed counter-measures to Canada's revised tax laws relating to advertising on US border TV stations, one of their suggestions was to ban the import of Canadian feature films! One is tempted to ask them, what feature films?

ORGANIZATIONS

CSC

Canadian Society of Cinematographers
22 Front St. West
Toronto, Ontario

CFEG

Canadian Film Editors Guild
P.O. Box 46, Terminal A
Toronto, Ontario

Annual Dinner and Dance

Again this year, the Canadian Society of Cinematographers is presenting craft awards recognizing the artistic achievements of Society members.

Awards will be presented for Cinematography in the following three categories: *Features, Documentary, Television Commercials.*

Films and television commercials must have been produced and completed between October 1, 1975 and September 30, 1976.

The Canadian Film Editors Guild is also presenting its own Effigy Awards for excellence in film editing in the following categories: *Features, T.V. Drama, Sales and Promotion (over 3 minutes), Sales and Promotion (under 3 minutes), Documentary and Educational (over 20 minutes), Documentary and Educational (under 20 minutes),* and *Short Subject. All* films entered in the above categories are also eligible for the *Sound Editing* Award.

Presentation of the Awards will be made at the Annual Dinner & Dance of the Canadian Film Editors Guild and the Canadian Society of Cinematographers to be held on the evening of Saturday, November 13 at Ontario Place. Contacts for the event are John Gaisford for the CFEG (416-862-1282) and Carol Betts for the CSC (416-923-3606).

CMPDA

Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association

1 Yonge St., suite 2207
Toronto, Ont. M5E 1E5
(416) 366-9266

A new award, dubbed "The Golden Reel", will be presented by the Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association at the Canadian Film Awards on October 24th.

The Golden Reel Award will honor the producer of the Canadian feature film that has achieved the highest level of commercial acceptance, in Canadian and foreign markets, during the last year.

Millard Roth, Executive Director of the CMPDA, announced the creation of the Golden Reel. The Award will be presented annually and is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- To emphasize the importance of commercial endeavour and achievement.
- To reinforce the need for foreign distribution of Canadian films.
- To recognize marketing and exploitation efforts.
- To begin to establish meaningful identification and reinforcement for these efforts and accomplishments.

The presentation will be made by Vic Beattie, the President of the Association, at the annual Canadian Film Awards which will be telecast across Canada by the CTV Television Network on October 24th, 1976.

The Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association is delighted to participate in the Canadian Film Awards in this manner.

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TECH NEWS

by Rodger J. Ross

60th ANNIVERSARY OF THE S.M.P.T.E.

An event of more than usual interest in film and television circles was the appearance in July of a special issue of *SMPTE Journal* commemorating the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers' 60th anniversary. Founded originally in 1916 as SMPE, mainly to promote motion picture standardization, the Society added the letter "T" for television to its title in 1950. The first president – and one of the 10 engineers signing the incorporation papers 34 years earlier – was C. Francis Jenkins, an early television pioneer. Thus from the very beginning, the Society has been closely associated with the development of television systems, as well as motion pictures.

A particularly interesting feature in this special issue of the *Journal* is a reprint of an article from the *Transactions of SMPE,* September 1925, reproducing letters written by Thomas A. Edison, George Eastman, Thomas Armat and C. Francis Jenkins, describing their work in developing motion picture systems. Mr. Eastman tells in his letter how, in 1889, 100-foot lengths of transparent film base were made by coating large sheets of glass with a solution of wood alcohol and soluble cotton, the first nitrate film base used for many years in making professional 35 mm. motion pictures.

Photographs on page 493 show the glass table on which the first sheets of transparent base were made, and the modern casting wheels 18 feet in diameter and 5 feet in width, polished to a mirror finish, for continuous coating of safety base film.

Another feature article with the title "101 Years of Television Technology" reviews television developments from the year 1875 when George R. Carey in Boston, Mass., disclosed an idea for a television system that would transmit and receive moving visual images electrically. It was not until 50 years later that technical advances and new discoveries enabled these ideas to be transformed into actual working systems. John Logie Baird in England and C. Francis Jenkins in the USA succeeded in transmitting small silhouette images in 1925, but Jenkins is credited with making the first radio (over-the-air) transmission of moving images across the Anacostia River near Washington, DC.

This fascinating story, prepared especially for the 60th anniversary issue of the *Journal* by Richard S. O'Brien and Robert B. Monroe, includes a chart on page 459 showing the dates of many significant events in the long history of television development. A photograph shows Dr. Vladimir K. Zworykin with a display of television camera tubes, an area of development in which he made important contributions, starting with the filing of a patent in 1923 for an electronically scanned camera pickup tube and a cathode ray display tube. Another very interesting photograph shows the small group headed by Charles Ginsburg that was responsible for one of the most important technical developments in the history of television broadcasting – the Ampex videotape recorder.

The development of color motion picture processes is the subject of another article by Roderick T. Ryan, starting with the earliest crude methods of tinting and toning to the present high-quality multilayer subtractive color systems. In the course of 60 years over 100 color processes have been described in the technical literature, but only a very few have survived.

Over the years the emphasis has shifted from additive to subtractive processes. Complicated mechanical and optical devices for filming and projection have been abandoned in favor of conventional equipment developed originally for making black-and-white motion pictures. Color quality and uniformity have been improved over the years, and film speeds have increased dramatically. For the foreseeable future color film production seems to be committed to the use of multilayer materials. But the author of this article points out that an ancient system of rotating filter discs and sequential frame recording of colors on film has been given a new lease on life with the transmission by the NASA Surveyor of the first color pictures from the moon.

Sidney P. Solow of Consolidated Film Industries in Hollywood contributed an article for this special issue of the *Journal* on "Milestones in the History of the Motion Picture Laboratory". The birthday of the motion picture laboratory coincides with the date of August 1889 when George Eastman sent some film to W.K.L. Dickson at Thomas A. Edison's laboratory in Newark, N.J., for use in his Kinetoscope. They had two darkrooms, one for punching, trimming and joining the films and printing the positives, and the other for developing, fixing and washing the films. These operations were carried out with large black enameled drums suspended at each end and immersed in long shallow troughs.

In this article Mr. Solow describes the most important events in the evolution of motion picture laboratory technology in the last 25 years. The laboratories have had to continuously up-date equipment and procedures to handle the many new materials and processes as they were introduced – the change-over from nitrate to safety-base films; multilayer color films; electronic timing; additive color printing systems; liquid gate printing; color duplicating materials, and computerization of laboratory operations, to mention only a few.

The evolution of motion picture camera design is described in two profusely illustrated articles, the first by Edmund M. Di Giulio of Cinema Products Corp., and the second, a reprint of a paper from the July 1967 issue of the *Journal,* also by Mr. Di Giulio, who was then

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Long-time Supervisor of Technical Film Operations at the programming centre of the CBC, Mr. Ross is the author of two books, **Television Film Engineering** *and* **Color Film for Color Television** *and has just won the Agfa-Gevaert Gold Medal, awarded by the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers.*

vice-president of engineering with the Mitchell Camera Corp., and co-authors E. C. Manderfeld and George C. Mitchell. The earlier paper deals with the large-screen formats, while the article prepared for the 60th anniversary of the Society is devoted mainly to the enormous technological developments in the 16 mm. field.

A committee, headed by that world-famous personality John Frayne, has contributed another well-illustrated article with the title "A Short History of Motion Picture Sound Recording in the United States". This article presents a step-by-step outline of the many problems encountered and the ingenious solutions developed before the optically recorded photographic sound track as we find it today on release prints could become a practical reality.

Continuing the series of three articles on sound, Loren Ryder surveys the subject of "Magnetic Sound Recording in the Motion Picture and Television Industries" and Hans Chr. Wohlrab gives some "Highlights of the History of Sound Recording on Film in Europe". Mr. Ryder describes how, during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II, General George S. Patton's soldiers captured two tape recorders from German Army Intelligence. The quality of the sound reproduced with these recorders was far better than sound recorded on film or on disc, and even better than any wire or steel ribbon recording known at that time. These tape recorders used a smooth-surfaced paper tape coated on one side with a finely ground layer of brown iron oxide.

Dr. Wohlrab mentions in his article the work of Waldemar Poulsen of Denmark who, in 1889, developed a method of magnetic sound recording on steel wire. His Telegraphone had two reels carrying 1500 feet of steel wire 1/100 inch in thickness. This system gave fairly good results but it was too cumbersome for practical use in sound recording. The breakthrough came in 1940 when two engineers at the Berlin radio station in Germany began experimenting with ¼-in. plastic tape coated with an iron oxide layer, forerunner of today's widely used magnetic tape.

Other articles in this issue include: "Advancements in Motion Picture and Television Set Lighting Equipment", "Developments in Design of Projection Equipment", "Photoinstrumentation and the SMPTE", and "The Early Years of the Canadian Film Industry".

This last article, by Gerald Graham of the National Film Board, is a brief survey of the ups and downs of film-making and distribution in Canada, the formation of the Dominion Government Motion Picture Bureau in 1918, and its reorganization in 1939 by John Grierson as the present National Film Board. The most productive period of development work was in the period 1950-1960, when the big studio concept was dying out and European and Japanese manufacturers were beginning to realize the significance of the multi-million-dollar market for non-theatrical and television film production facilities.

In the introduction to this special issue of the *Journal,* President Kenneth Mason puts particular emphasis on the encouragement given by the Society to young people looking towards a career in motion pictures and television. Thirteen student chapters have been formed in colleges and universities, and the Society administers grants for both undergraduate and graduate scholarships. (One of the student chapters is at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in Toronto.)

The Society has two sections in Canada – the Montreal/Ottawa/Quebec section, Robert B. Desrosiers, chairman; and the Toronto section with Peter Elliott as chairman. Altogether there are over 700 members of the Society in this country, represented on the Board of Governors by two well-known Canadians – Finlay J. Quinn of Quinn Laboratories in Toronto, and Stanley F. Quinn, head of the operations development department, Canadian Broadcasting Corp., Montreal.

EQUIPMENT NEWS

Note to Canadian distributors: We would like to include the names and addresses of Canadian distributors of equipment and services mentioned in this section. Please ask your suppliers to give Canadian sources in their publicity releases. Ed.

Research Products Special Effects Optical Printers

The complete line of Research Products special effects optical printers has been acquired by Bell & Howell Professional Equipment Div., 7100 McCormick Road, Chicago, Ill. Research Products optical printers have become world-famous for quality performance in special effects lab-including the aerial image optical printer, the standard optical effects printer and the registration contact printer, all with the optional Bell & Howell automatic additive color light source or a subtractive light source. In addition the newly introduced title-optical printer will be produced, offering high quality 16 mm optical effects printing at a surprisingly low price.

Solid-State Film Counter From MTM and Braun

MultiTrack Magnetics Inc. has designed a footage counter unique in the film and television industry. The MD-3 Dynamic Counter has four counting or dividing circuits that allow the user to cross-reference running times in 35 mm., 16 mm., Super-8 and time. This is a big advantage in 16 mm. for later blow-up to 35 mm. or reduction to Super-8. Editing for television use is now particularly easy with the almost instant comparison between footage and time. Additional comparator

Solid State Dynamic Footage Counter

blocks are available, to provide presetting functions for controlling the triggering of other equipment in the system. The footage counter can be used like a mini-computer for automatic looping and dubbing. The counter interfaces with existing equipment by use of an infra-red optical shaft encoder. Braun Electric Canada Ltd., 3269 American Drive, Mississauga, Ont., L4V 1B9 is the exclusive Canadian distributor for MultiTrack Magnetics equipment. Catalogues and prices on request. □

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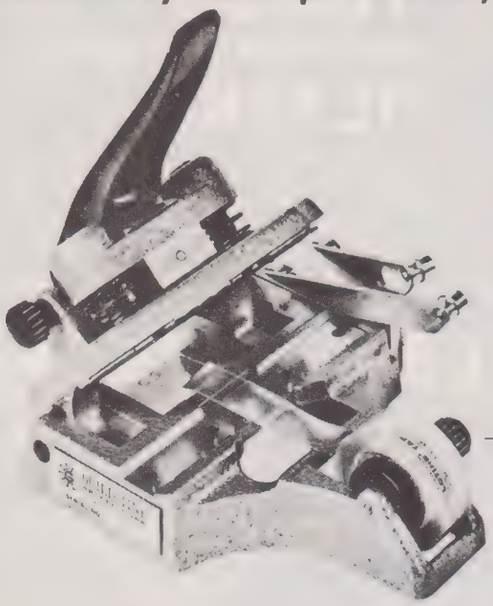

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EDITORIAL

Must We Wait Another Year?

Mr. Faulkner's testament to the film industry seems to be a leaked document entitled "Draft Film Policy," excerpts of which follow this editorial. It is rumored that John Roberts, the newly appointed Secretary of State, will delay making decisions on a film policy for at least a year. A quick look at the Canadian Film Awards, or the National Film Board regionalization program, or the CBC might make Mr. Roberts want to act more swiftly.

The Awards represent the pick of the crop in film production. The majority of films chosen for competition in the CFA this year come from the public sector: the CBC and the NFB. This alone substantiates the comment made in the Draft: "The domination of this significant informational and cultural medium by publicly owned enterprises is probably no longer a situation that best serves the national interest or allows for the kind of environment best suited to creative and professional development of Canadian film activity." Since the decision has been made to foster a private film industry, and since the national interest is not served by the present situation, when will a film policy come down to clarify things?

Private industry has been at the heels of the National Film Board for years now. A recent trip to Halifax and a look at the NFB regionalization program raised more questions than it answered. Why is the NFB expanding into the "regions" just when the Tompkins report and the Draft suggest that it should withdraw from areas which make it competitive with the private sector? Why is the NFB training filmmakers when the universities are already turning out greater numbers of eager filmmakers than the market can absorb? What kind of film policy is going to provide work for these young people?

Faulkner said, just one year ago, that the trouble with influencing or reorganizing the CBC was its size, its staff, and its hardware. Will it be any easier to 'rearrange' the NFB once regional offices are open across the country, inciting more and more to get involved?

One cynical conclusion is that the regionalization program of the NFB is a stopgap measure, one way to put off the day of reckoning which must surely come. Computer distribution can now be tested and expanded. Video workshops can be set up and new relationships built with organizations like co-ops, schools, universities and other groups. Witness the co-operation the NFB is giving the Festival of Festivals, for instance. Is it all in the national interest? Must we now wait until the NFB has proven its 'regionalization case' or failed to do so before the Secretary of State will announce a film policy?

The above is not meant as a wholesale condemnation of the NFB nor of the regionalization program, though serious reservations are inevitable. Changes in the structure of the NFB – major changes like the regionalization program – should be undertaken as a result of a global film policy. Changes which are made regardless of the functioning of the other federal agencies will only compound the difficulty for the Secretary of State when – if ever – a global policy is written.

How did it happen that while everyone was worrying about the National Film Board encroaching on private industry, John Hirsch of CBC Drama became the biggest film producer in Canada? Not only does he command the largest budgets, he has access to distribution and exhibition. The threat of the NFB to private industry is peanuts next to that of the CBC, especially as the importance of television continues to grow.

What isn't explicit in the Draft Film Policy – but is conspicuous by its absence – is that the CBC is untouchable, at least for the Secretary of State. By law, it is easy for the Secretary to adjust the budgets of the NFB. Perhaps that is one reason that private industry has applied so much pressure concerning the Board. Faced with the crown corporation which is the CBC, the Secretary's hands are tied, or almost. In speaking of the transfer of film production from the public sector to the private, the Draft states, "For the CBC, given the complexity of difficulties connected with such a transfer, in this case, the recommendation is in general terms only. ...The President of the CBC has agreed to keep the Secretary of State informed of progress." Sounds suspiciously like the voluntary quota the Secretary "negotiated" with the theatre chains.

The Canadian Film Development Corporation has had its appropriations extended for yet another year, but here too direction is badly needed. Will the CFDC get into TV, into short films, into distribution and the rest? The CFDC has started to make a little bit of money, investing in some pretty violent movies. Is this the direction in which the Secretary of State wants the industry to move? What is the cultural trade-off which will make the CFDC worth the taxpayers' money?

But then one can hardly blame a man for wanting to read through the files before making decisions. Perhaps the blame should be directed at the government, which time and again shuffles the cabinet just as the Secretary of State is starting to grasp the film scene.

At any rate, please read quickly, Mr. Roberts. We're all getting older and things aren't getting better.

Connie and Jean-Pierre Tadros

"The dearth of reliable facts and figures has been one of the main obstacles in the way of formulating a comprehensive policy on film. To rectify this deficiency, my department, in the summer of 1975, with the approval of the Treasury Board, commissioned the BMC to undertake a study of the Canadian film industry. This study was completed and reported on in April 1976."

– The author

draft film policy

It is not known who is the author of the following document, nor why it was leaked to the press just now. It would seem that it comes from the office of the Secretary of State, and was prepared for the Cabinet in order to finalize the federal government's film policy. It was obviously prepared before Mr. Faulkner was removed as Secretary of State.

Because of the considerable length of the Draft Film Policy, only certain excerpts are printed below. The portions of the document which have been excluded are those which describe the actual situation – with which most of ***Cinema Canada's*** *readers are already familiar and which is amply described in the Tompkins Report (properly called the BMC Report) – and the Recommendations which simply reformulate for the Cabinet the recommendations already contained in the body of the document. The italics are those of* ***Cinema Canada.***

Background

...Total production of the Canadian film industry in 1975 is estimated to have been $150 million of which *$115 million was either financed or produced by the public sector* (Fifteen of the $115 million was channeled through the private sector). The ratio is about 2:1 as between public and private production. The $50 million attributed to the private sector includes $20 million of television films for the CTV network. This last item distorts the picture of private sector production, however, when it is recognized that most, if not all, of the production for CTV is done by one company which is a subsidiary of CFTO Toronto, the CTV flagship station.

Of public sector production, *$65 million is accounted for by CBC-produced films and videotapes,* $17 million by the National Film Board, $4 million through CFDC investment and $29 million by the provinces, including $7 million spent by the Ontario Educational Communications Authority primarily on in-house production, with an undetermined amount being work contracted out, and $12 million sponsored by the Quebec government film office.

The element of Canadian production that includes industrial films and television commercials is estimated to have had a value in 1975 of $6 million, the larger part of which was private sector business.

Figures on the sharing of the Canadian market for educational and television films and videotapes between Canadian and non-Canadian production are not firm but the best estimate based on available data is that in 1975, *about 2/3 of the holdings of educational material were of foreign origin.* If holdings are a reasonably true indication of expenditures, it would appear that of a total expenditure of $11 million in 1975 by the educational sector (schools, colleges, universities and public libraries) $7.3 million went for imported films and videotapes and $3.7 million (shared about evenly between the private and public sectors) for Canadian products. Imported television films and tapes in 1975 are estimated at $40 million.

Between 800 and 900 first run feature films are shown annually in Canadian cinemas; over 90% are foreign. Cinema box-office receipts total annually about $200 million of which $60 million in film rental revenue is drawn off by foreign-owned or foreign-controlled distributing companies...

Canadian Film Development Corp:

Options

... In my judgement, a number of steps taken since the 1972 Cabinet decision and other related factors, taken together with the changes in the CFDC Act proposed hereunder, weigh in favour of continued improvement in the feature film industry in Canada, and make the fourth option for the CFDC (Expanding the role of the CFDC) the only valid one ...

Proposed Legislative Changes Affecting the CFDC

The CFDC Act as it stands limits the Corporation to investment in feature films on a film-by-film basis. If it were able to invest in projects of companies engaged in all classes of film production including industrial films, television commercials and films and videotapes for television programs, it would be ensured of a better rate of return because such films are not as high-risk propositions as are feature films. For companies producing feature films as well, the revenue earned from other film production can be used to cross finance part of the cost of feature films. The CFDC would be able to concentrate its investments in the production of those films which show greatest potential for viability and profit. This type of investment behavior represents the industry approach it is now believed would be the most effective way the CFDC can function in providing financial assistance to the film industry.

I am proposing, therefore, that section 10 of the CFDC Act be amended by the *deletion of the word "feature" wherever it appears* and by eliminating paragraphs (1) (b), (1) (c), (1) (d), and (1) (e). (1) (b) authorizes the CFDC to make loans to producers and is recommended for deletion in line with the views expressed by the Department of Finance as mentioned below. The responsibility for carrying out the purposes of (1) (c) and (1) (d) would be assumed by The Canada Council. (1) (e) would be combined with (1) (a) in a new section as follows: "invest in the production and distribution of Canadian films in return for a share in the proceeds from any such productions, and to advise and assist producers of Canadian films in the distribution of such flms and in the administrative functions of film production."

The Board of Directors of the CFDC consists of six members, including the Chairman and the Government Film Commissioner (ex officio). I propose that the membership be increased to eight to facilitate better representation and that the selection of members reflect more in the future the commercial and industrial orientation of the CFDC role. I recommend also, that the Chairman serve at the same time as the chief executive of the Corporation and have supervision over and direction of the work and staff of the Corporation and preside at its meetings. *This change would dispense with the present provision for the appointment of an executive director.* Section 4 (2) and 12 would be amended accordingly...

Other Considerations

Consideration has been given to recommending amendments to the CFDC Act whereby the Corporation would be empowered to function as a banker and to deal with applications for loans from film production companies making all types of films or videotapes; and there have been strong representations from the industry favouring such amendments. The proposition was discussed with senior officials of the Department of Finance whose opinion is that *the role of lender or guarantor of loans would be inappropriate for the CFDC* since this would duplicate the function of existing government and private institutions.

Instead, Department of Finance officials, while advocating the continuance of the Corporation as an equity investor, in a broader range of film productions as described ... above, believe that loans or loan guarantees for film makers ought to be the business of the chartered banks or other lending institutions, but that the CFDC, because of its experience and intimate knowledge of the film industry, could properly and effectively play the role of an investment broker, providing leadership, counsel and expertise, rather than that of a lender of funds. Finance officials visualize the Corporation collaborating with film producers or groups of producers and investors in assembling investment packages which banks and other lending institutions might be prepared to look at with a degree of interest which normally they do not evince when examining applications from film producers for lines of credit. Finance officials supported the notion of exploring with the Federal Business Development Bank the possibility that it might provide working capital loans or other forms of assistance to film companies able to meet its criteria. This possibility was discussed between CFDC and Secretary of State officials and the management of the F.B.D.B.

The NFB, CBC and the Private Sector

Sponsored Films

... The Sponsored Film Committee recommended in its report of March, 1976, to the Secretary of State that at least 50% of the money spent by federal departments on film production should continue to be directed to the private film industry, thus confirming a practice that had already been initiated by NFB and was encouraged by the Cabinet decision of May 11, 1972 on film policy. The situation is now that the private sector is getting about half of the business of a $4 million program. The BMC report on film markets indicates that certain federal departments and agencies have internal audio-visual branches and undertake direct procurement, and *estimates that direct procurement expenditures outside the sponsored film program probably equal or exceed the $4 million handled by the NFB.* Private filmmakers are still critical of the way the program operates, saying that the 50% they get are films the NFB is prepared to let someone else make. Moreover, they object strongly to the fact that under section 9 (b) the NFB is able to control the tendering by private film makers on films and prevent direct negotiations between the latter and client government departments. The private sector believes that through direct negotiations, it can encourage greater and more effective use of film by the government...

Therefore, *in recommending that the sponsored film program be opened up further to the private sector, I am not, at the same time, recommending NFB's complete withdrawal from it.* It is my belief that there are films which are of particular national and cultural importance that should carry the label of the government's film agency. The combined cost of such projects should not in any one year exceed 30% of the total amount spent by sponsoring departments in the preceding year.

I am proposing with that Department's concurrence, that the Department of Supply and Services assume the present responsibility of the NFB for tendering contracts for films sponsored by government departments, and that *the awarding of contracts to the NFB be limited to 30%* of dollar volume as indicated in the preceding paragraph.

Transfer of NFB and CBC In-House Production to the Private Sector

A small percentage of the NFB and CBC in-house film production is now transfered to the private sector by way of commissioning whole films from the industry ($1.7 million by NFB – $2.8 million by CBC). The BMC report considers it essential that these government agencies redirect their functions 'in the spirit of market complementarity'. Ministers are aware of the recent petition to the House of Commons by film workers of the English Canadian Film Industry calling upon Parliament to ask the Secretary of State "to encourage both CBC and NFB to increase the amount of co-production with, and the number of films commissioned from, the private sector .".

For the National Film Board, I propose that this intention be couched in precise terms by recommending that, commencing in 1978-79, *not less than one half of any increase in the annual production budget,* exclusive of sponsored films, *be earmarked for contracting or commissioning complete film projects by private film production companies.*

For the CBC, given the complexity of difficulties connected with such a transfer, in this case, *the recommendation is in general terms only.* The CBC is prepared, "as the private program industry continues to develop its production competence and its entrepreneurial skills... to call on it to help meet the growing program requirements of the future. The Corporation expects to assign increasing amounts of its production work to private industry subject to successful management of its commitments and responsibilities." The President of the CBC has agreed to keep the Secretary of State informed of progress.

Educational Films

A basic problem facing educational film producers and distributors in Canada is the small size of the market which, combined with difficulties in breaking into foreign markets, restricts revenues and inhibits the growth of production and distribution companies. Companies making educational films have a marginal existence; intense competition in a limited market prevents growth which could lead to stability. Even a slight fluctuation in this market can have serious results for these companies. The pricing practices of the NFB can cause sporadic fluctuations in the market, particularly that agency's discounts. In the private sector discounts rarely rise above 10% and are given in nearly all cases for series purchases, for example, to encourage a customer to buy all ten titles in a series, say, on the environment. By contrast, the NFB gives much larger discounts for bulk purchases. These discounts can amount to 50% for large bulk orders. This has the effect of encouraging major customers who might have purchased from a variety of sources, including private distributors, to buy all or most of their films from a single source, the NFB. This aggravates the risk factor for a private distributor who may suddenly find that a regular customer has been drawn away by NFB prices which he, the private distributor, cannot match.

In the light of the difficulties facing the private sector producer and distributor of educational films, the NFB has undertaken to reexamine its pricing practices with a view to their revision in relation to those of the private sector; and I am recommending Cabinet's approval of this proposed revision. It is not intended that the NFB's present practice of lending films free of charge to registered charitable organizations will be changed as a result of the review.

Canada Council's Role in Film

... There is a class of filmmakers whose experience is not proven to the extent where they would be able to qualify for funding by the CFDC, but who have demonstrated especially creative and technical ability. There are filmmakers also who normally would qualify for assistance under the heading of individual non-feature film projects, but whose productions, although of creative and cultural merit, would probably not have sufficient market appeal to ensure commercial success. It is proposed that Canada Council should assume responsibility for the support of these classes of filmmaking, essentially the lower-budget experimental, innovative but always professional calibre type film. It is from this field of film activity that some of the successful producers and directors of the future are likely to emerge. In this connection, the Canada Council is seen as having a key role in a government program for training filmmakers, including producers, directors, script writers, cameramen, etc. an outline of which program is given below under Training...

Reorganization of the Public Film Sector

At this time, in addition to proposing amendments to the Canadian Film Development Corporation Act, I am recommending that the National Film Act be amended for the immediate and specific purpose of giving legislative sanction to changes in the National Film Board's position regarding government-sponsored films. I would, at the same time, have wished to bring forward amendments affecting, among other things, the role of the Government Film Commissioner, but have concluded that such *other changes might better await a study of the possible restructuring of the entire public film sector,* embracing the film activities of the NFB, the CFDC, the Canada Council and the Department of the Secretary of State. The nature and scope and the need of the study will depend very much on what developments take place in respect of the private film sector as a result of the policy changes recommended in this memorandum. I believe that several years will be required to appraise such developments but the government should consider bringing forward *new global legislation within the next two to three years for implementation within five years from now.*

Training

... This situation has been reviewed jointly by the NFB, CBC, the Canada Council and the department and a proposal has been developed. *Participants in a course designed by the National Film Board and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation* would work under the supervision of professionally qualified and experienced directing coaches, dramaturgists and script editors. They would get experience in handling actors, and would follow the editing, sound-mixing and entire film process to get as broad a base as possible...

Distribution

... Some way must be found, through moral suasion or by fiscal measures, to persuade the foreign distributors, who are drawing off about $60 million annually in film rental

revenue, to assist the distribution and promotion of Canadian films in United States and other foreign markets. To this end, *my officials have entered into negotiations with the Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association.* The possibility of fiscal measures to provide leverage in these negotiations has been discussed with Department of Finance officials, and several options are under consideration...

On the side of non-theatrical film, the situation is not dissimilar in that about *two-thirds of the market for educational films and other audio-visual educational material are occupied by imports* mostly from the United States, and a number of the larger distributors of such products are foreign-owned or controlled. It is considered that in order to assist purchasers and film users, and to offset the advantages enjoyed by foreign producers and their distributor organizations in Canada, an improvement is necessary in the system of distributing, promoting and providing up-to-date information on Canadian non-theatrical films. I have recently authorized a special study of the 16 mm film market in Canada, with particular emphasis upon these aspects.

The National Film Board, though the mechanism of a network of field offices, has been providing a distribution service for its own films; it has recently proposed a plan for enlarging the scope and improving the efficiency of this system through the development of a computerized information bank and booking system for handling all Canadian produced films, those of the private sector as well as NFB films ...

What is not yet clear in the plan are the nature and extent of its benefits to the private film industry. While private producers do not object to the idea of a government agency, the National Film Board, operating a national catalogue and data centre for Canadian films, they would be opposed to any plan of the Board to handle the distribution by sale or rental of private sector films on the ground that the Board's record of performance in the marketing and promotion of its own films leaves room for doubt about its ability and willingness to "push" the private sector's product.

There already exists an efficient national information and booking service operated by the Canadian Film Institute, a private organization which receives some financial assistance from the Canada Council, the National Library and the NFB. The Institute has computerized its booking system. On the whole, the service provided by the Institute was well regarded by the private film sector. Pending more detailed study of the NFB proposal, *I am unable to make any recommendation on distribution in this memorandum.*

The Role of Provincial Governments

A wholly self-sustaining feature film industry is not feasible in any country except the United States; most governments with film industries provide them financial support through legislative arrangements whereby revenue earned at the box office is directed back into the hands of the film producer... Consultations with the provinces indicate that, for the most part, they are not prepared to introduce levies but are not opposed to the federal government's imposing a tax on theatre admissions provided, of course, the tax is clearly identified as federal. This is one of the possible fiscal measures being discussed with Finance officials...

Financial Considerations

It is proposed that the annual appropriation for the Canadian Film Development Corporation over the next five years, commencing fiscal year 1977-78, be increased to permit, in addition to the funds required for administration ($608,000 in 1976-77) a net investment averaging six million annually. Investments in 1976-77 on feature films only are forecast at $4,189,000 with expected return of $800,000 (see Annex "B" to this memorandum for the CFDC's five year investment plan).

To allow Canada Council to assume a greater responsibility for the support of the developmental class of film referred to above, the Council's budget for film production support should be increased by $600,000 in 1977-78. Its 1976-77 forecast expenditure is $450,000. This additional funding would permit Canada Council to assume the responsibility of the CFDC for the special investment program to help new directors and producers with their first films. It is equivalent to the amount budgeted by CFDC in the past year. To make awards for outstanding accomplishments in script-writing and production of Canadian films, a further amount of $25,000 should be added.

The cost of a government-sponsored film training program has been estimated (1975-76 dollars) at $4 million annually. The CBC and the NFB are able to provide $2.2 million from existing budgets. Canada Council's participation in the program would require a $200,000 increase in its appropriation. The balance of the new money requirement of $1.6 million beginning 1977-78, would be allocated proportionally to CBC and NFB.

Conclusions

... On one side of the field of competition in non-theatrical film the private film sector finds itself facing a firmly entrenched, publicly financed industry and, on the other, a strong, competitive force in the form of lower-cost imported films and other audio-visual products. In its efforts to establish an environment in which the private film industry can operate relatively free of some at least of the conditions which, it seems clear, are restricting its ability to perform competitively and to develop, *the government is faced with choices that are not easy but probably should not be deferred much longer.*

There can be no certainty at the outset, in the event of the transfer to the private sector of a substantial portion of the non-theatrical film production now carried on 'in-house' by the NFB and the CBC, that the private sector will be capable of delivering a viable film industry in this country, even with the appropriate kind and measure of government support; that it will become competitive with foreign film producers and, at the same time, that it will serve the nation's interests in respect of film as a medium of cultural expression. *The most one can say at this time is that conditions ought to be such as to permit it to show what it can achieve...*

In this memorandum I am suggesting that the time has probably passed where the government can continue appropriately to occupy the share of the non-theatrical film market it has held for the past quarter century or more. *The domination of this significant informational and cultural medium by publicly owned enterprises is probably no longer a situation that best serves the national interest* or allows for the kind of environment best suited to the creative and professional development of Canadian film activity. As stated above, however, the elimination of all government-based activity in the non-theatrical film field is not contemplated; there will continue to be an important (if not indispensable) contribution to be made by the public sector, including training of promising filmmakers. The complementarity of the public sector to the private is probably the key factor in the proposed new disposition. The problem is one of finding the right balance between the public sector's role and share and those of the private side; where that point of balance is and at what point in time we should look to its attainment will be determined by experience.

the pick of the crop

The Canadian Film Awards give us the opportunity to take stock and judge the quality of the annual production. In the public mind, the future of the industry is linked with the creation of a feature film industry, and it is not surprising that the features receive the most attention. The following article mentions those in competition.

Overview

This year, 41 films have been pre-selected to be judged by a strong international jury at the Canadian Film Awards: Joseph Losey, Sidney J. Furie, Gordon Pinsent, Luce Guilbeault, Les Wedman and Martin Malina.

Eight of the films are fictional features (cut down from the 17 submitted to the pre-selection jury), and the rest – 33 – are non-fictional features or shorts. Of the 33, 18 come from the National Film Board and 3 from the CBC.

The awards present us with the opportunity to take stock. If this year's pre-selection is any measure, one conclusion is that the public sector is alive and well. No films from the private sector were chosen for either the animation category or for the TV drama category. Nevertheless, no NFB films were selected in the experimental category. (It is interesting to note that in the "Draft Film Policy", p. 22, the author states "There will continue to be a need for the NFB to produce, as in the past... experimental or innovative films.")

The Awards are hype, a chance for a collective party and the honoring of certain members of the industry for a job well done. Nat Taylor, this year's president, is banking everything on an awakening of the public through the national broadcast. He has the co-operation of the Famous Players and Odeon theatre chains which show the CFA poster, hand out the program and run trailers about the televised awards.

Pre-selection

The Awards are as valid as the pre-selection, and the pre-selection jury – unpaid and unfed – sits for a full week, sifting through the 158 films entered to choose the films which will be in competition. The jury consists of one member of the participating organizations: the Council of Canadian Filmmakers, the Canadian League of Composers, the Canadian Society of Cinematographers, the Canadian Film and Television Association, the Motion Picture Theatre Associations of Canada, the Directors Guild of Canada, the Society of Filmmakers, the Motion Picture Distributors Association (sic), the Canadian Film Editors Guild, ACTRA, the Canadian Association of Motion Picture Producers and the American Federation of Musicians. This year, neither of the last two associations sent jurors.

As was the case last year, representatives from the East and West were absent. When Mr. Taylor was asked whether or not the CFA should think about including the British Columbia Film Industries Association, for example, the response was, "They can come if they want, but we're not paying their expenses." Why not? How else will highly competent judges from across the country be lured into taking on the job of the pre-selection?

The Schlock

What are the criteria of the pre-selection anyway? In the feature category, the international jury should have had a crack at ***Death Weekend.*** *The features which are pre-selected should be those which have made a major impact in the industry and on the public, or a major artistic impact on the critics. The pre-selection should eliminate only the insignificant films. It's for the international jury to tell us that the films are good or bad.*

The pre-selection jury swept ***Death Weekend*** *under the carpet like a shameful thing. Nevertheless, it – along with its less effective cousins* ***Clown Murders, Point of No Return*** *and* ***Shadow of the Hawk*** *– represent a major current in actual feature production. These films are being made because* ***Shivers*** *and* ***Black Christmas*** *brought money back to the producers. It is not up the pre-selection jury to condemn the makers of schlock; the quality of our films should be judged by that highly competent international jury which is brought to Toronto. The CFA pre-selection should at least offer that jury a fair choice of the kinds of films being made. How else are we to come to terms with film production in Canada?*

Connie Tadros

Partners

Director Don Owen

d. Don Owen, **asst. d.** Tony Thatcher, **sc.** Norman Snider and Don Owen. **ph.** Marc Champion, **ed.** George Appleby, **sd.** James McCarthy, **sd. ed.** Ralph Brunjes & Ellen Adams, **sd. re-rec.** David Appleby, **p. designer** Seamus Flannery, **set dec.** Gerry Holmes, **m.** Murray McLauchlan, **cost.** Patti Unger, **choreo.** Frank Ruffo, **l.p.** Denholm Elliott (John Grey), Hollis McLaren (Heather Grey), Michael J. Margotta (Paul Howard), Lee Broker (Philip Rudd), Irena Mayeska (Aunt Margot), Robert Silverman (Hayes), Robert Warner (Gordon), Delroy Lindo (Caleb), Heath Lamberts (Piano Jimmy), **exec. p.** G. Chalmers Adams, **p.** G. Chalmers Adams and Don Owen, **assoc. p.** Robert Linnell, **p.c.** Clearwater Films Ltd., 1975, **color,** 35 mm, **running time** 93 minutes, **dist.** Astral Films (Canada).

Partners is a film about a series of partners: Canada and America are partners of sorts – unequal partners, with the weaker one often expressing reluctance to move to the stronger's rhythm; Heather Grey and Paul Howard are partners – naive and youthful partners in an exuberant and fantastic dance; the Canadian businessman, John Grey, inheritor of Canada Pulp and Paper, is involved in a wary dance of opportunity and consolidation with the president of an American multinational. Don Owen's fourth feature is a sophisticated thriller/romance/fantasy partnered with indigenously Canadian sensibilities – a fine marriage of form and content.

Co-authored by Owen and Norman Snider, the story evolves around Heather Grey, the dilettante heiress of well-managed old Canadian money, and Paul Howard, a free-wheeling, rather sloppy American "freelance entrepreneur", as he calls himself. Heather discovers Paul in the act of stealing key papers on the state of her father's business for a multinational looking to expand into Canada, and – while the first image of Heather is one of detailed precision as she peers through a microscope – her lack of direction allows her to protect Paul from further detection. She thus becomes a partner in a takeover plot – a plot in which even Paul is a disinterested patsy. Perhaps that is too strong an expression; it does not give the flavor of his attractive energy and vivid imagination which Heather from her conservative position finds so appealing and inspiring. But finally his directionless energy, like his gunshot in the air, inexplicably hits home. With the killing of the bird, Heather is expected to deal with it and in doing so she is strengthened and the ties of the partnership are weakened.

In the male-dominated world of business and male-female partnerships, the character of Heather is a study of growth. Her attraction to Paul's exotic aggressiveness seduces her into becoming a helpmate in a dope-running intrigue; the love scenes, some of the most beautiful I have seen on film in their fluid explicitness, are central to Heather's forgetfulness of her true interests. I spoke of Heather's dilettantism; with Paul, she adopts a cavalier attitude toward her money, her family and its historical position.

While initially Paul has the power to draw her away from her true interests, he, paradoxically, reveals to Heather her need to hold onto and perpetuate them: "You're hooked into this – this history. I'm outside – I want to be inside." Paul's imaginative, on-the-run opportunism pales beside this cool creature of careful breeding – "The thing about people like me" says Heather "is that we really are together." By the middle of the film, Heather has Paul working for the Grey interests – but his actions have produced reverberations which neither can control and, by the end of the film, they have another death between them and this time it's not a bird. Once again she has the necessary strength and control to deal with it and this time the partnership is dissolved.

I suppose it is rather unfair to criticize Owen for being a filmmaker who deals within the context of the middle class. All his films have evolved around characters whose plights are individual and creative without reference to a larger political context. But with **Partners,** Owen is moving into a subject matter which is simply a question of which national group of capitalists control Canadian resources and this question centres on the *style* of opportunism.

But in this analysis of style, **Partners** is brilliant: John Grey's relaxed manner, his soft British accent, his familiarity with many forms of pleasures – listening to music, talk of duck hunting in Manitoba, the physical exertion and joy in rebuilding his dock – all this is attractive and in direct contrast to the nasal-accented, blue-suited American, Gordon, and his hardnosed henchmen who use threats, guns and have maps of Canada hanging in their hotel rooms. Grey's money is time-worn, the result of land grants given to loyal Sir George Adam Grey in the name of a grateful monarch. And because Canada is a country whose predominant resource is land; because Grey's sensitivity to this resource is a real aspect of his character (he talks passionately about reforestation and "the special privilege of this country – untrammelled nature"); because Grey is involved in the preservation of the past, his opportunism is less pragmatic, less hurried, less brutal – the slow strangle as opposed to sudden death.

Transferring heroin in the elevator: **Partners**

In the final analysis, this difference is theatrical (or cinematic) but unessential. It would, however, be naive to think that Owen did not understand the weakness of his position on Canadian nationalism; the historical flashbacks of the Loyalists fighting off the Americans are set to a reading of Sir Grey's diary: "We were surprised in the clearing by American irregulars and it was difficult to differentiate our militia from the Americans" and even when he could differentiate, he found himself "pursuing Thomas Benton, a good friend these many years." The diary also speaks of the difficulty of knowing at which point the territories were indeed separate. And so, in spite of the differing styles of the Americans and Canadians, those styles are not foreign to each other, both reaching for the same end.

The quality which has struck me most forcibly in **Partners** is its verisimilitude in the midst of a fantastic plot and setting. The sets are gorgeous and generous and even the foot-loose Paul ("I like to keep moving – no address, no bills") lives richly and with expensive taste. The characters too are fantastic and bold, but Owen's skill is in supplying all his characters, large and small, with life-giving details. The three main characters are good, their growth a source of real interest to the viewer, but where Owen reveals his consumate skill is in the minor characters – the dope dealer and three plainclothes police officers waiting to bust him and his contacts, the wonderfully controlled aunt and her interchange with John Grey at the peopled northern garden party, the Pinteresque tea-time conversation – all these people and minor situations add a richness to the film fabric, details and spaces for interesting speculations.

Don Owen, director, and Marc Champion, cinematographer, talk about a shot

Owen has also mastered a symbolic level which is totally integrated into the fast-moving storyline. The first shot of Heather shows her cutting – one wants to say "dissecting" – a maple leaf and examining it under a microscope; and does the fact that it's bright orange-red, in the last richness of fall, mean anything? As Heather harbors Paul in the rec room they circle around a globe and, with the question "You're an American, aren't you?", Paul touches that globe. And let me mention too the marvellous scene when Paul, who has helped to betray John Grey's business interests, finds himself, smartly dressed, in the water beside Grey and at the feet of the American businessman who has paid Paul for informaton and wants more.

Partners is an excellent film – fast-moving, totally involving and excellently shot by Marc Champion.

Eleanor Beattie

Don Owen's new Canadian film **Partners** uses its title in two different ways. The young man and woman at its centre meet and become partners – in crime of a sort and also in passion. A second partnership explored is the cultural and business relations of Canada and the United States. It is an entertaining film, if overall disappointing as the first feature from Don Owen in several years. Looking like a frank attempt at a commercial property, **Partners** doesn't put itself out of critical court by being excessively violent or far-fetched (like **Breaking Point** and others). It is a "thriller" with only one killing and relies, generally, not so much on sensation as on a tense cleverness worthy of Hitchcock at times. When the young man (Michael Margotta) breaks into a hotel room, he is surprised by a maid who politely inquires if he needs clean towels!

The story is a bit casual about drugs – which I think we should be reminded are dangerous to health – but refrains from unduly glamorizing its confused pair of young people, whose edgy attraction to each other is based on opposition. (He's a social climber, she belongs to an establishment family, presided over by Denholm Elliott, in an immaculate performance of comfortable but threatened privilege.)

In terms of "commercial appeal" versus serious intentions – which are not really incompatible, but often seem to be – **Partners** places plenty of action at the beginning and end and leaves a central section free for some thoughts about American domination of Canadian industry and how our self-regard may be affected. This is interesting, though thematically underdeveloped, and allows for a relaxed interlude among the autumnal splendors of Niagara-on-the-Lake. **Partners,** then, is a film of some merit but it leaves open the bigger question of where exactly Don Owen, who hit a national nerve with his **Nobody Waved Goodbye** a dozen years ago, is "at" today.

Clive Denton

Goldenrod

Director Harvey Hart

d. Harvey Hart, **asst. d.** Tony Thatcher, **sc.** Lionel Chetwynd, **dial. ed.** Ellen Adams, **ph.** Harry Makin, **ed.** Ralph Bruajes (CFEG), Peter Shatglow, Ron Wisman, **sd.** Karl Scherer, **sup. sd. ed.** Ken Heeley-Ray, **a.d.** George Holmes, **set dec.** Fred Geringer, **cost.** Patti Unger, **l.p.** Tony Lobianco, Donald Pleasance, Gloria Carlin, Will Darrow McMillan, **exec. p.** David Susskind, **p.** Lionel Chetwynd, Gerry Arbeld, **assoc. p.** Duane Howard, **p. manager.** Timothy Rouse, **p.c.** August Films and Talent Associates, 1976, **col. running time** 90 min. **dist.** Ambassador

At the conclusion of **Goldenrod** there were tears in my eyes. Not overflowing down my cheeks, you understand, but ready to do so if I blinked incautiously. And something about the movie has to be given credit for this embarrassing state of affairs – a state all the more remarkable when you consider that for half of the movie's length I had been shifting about in my seat and muttering 'Oh shit!' loud enough to be heard.

Perhaps the surest stimulus for tears, in art, life, and the movies, is the spectacle of reconciliation – when two people yield to a prompting they have long resisted, and acknowledge that they love each other after all and will try again. It's a good place to end the story, because as often as not, nothing much comes of this lovely purifying moment, and all the old thorns come poking through within a few days or weeks. That the joyful flow of healing reconciliation will re-

The joyful flow of healing in **Goldenrod**

deem all the years gone by is a dream of the highest art – like **Lear** and **The Winter's Tale** and **Dombey and Son** – and of the quite low, like Harvey Hart's production of **Goldenrod.**

The strength and emotional power of **Goldenrod** are in Herbert Harker's novel, which the film version does its damnedest to sabotage at every turn. I know there's a school of thought that says you should treat a film in "filmic" terms, whatever that means, and not apply literary standards to it. Bullshit. A film begins as a screenplay – a screen play – which means a structured progression of dramatic episodes, and the revelation of character and relationships through dialogue and behavior. And when a preexisting work has furnished the governing imaginative and moral conception to the tale, that work inevitably stands as a point of reference.

The screen adaptation of Goldenrod (by Lionel Chetwynd) is a travesty of the original. Why start with a novel at all, if you're going to pull it out of shape so crudely and insensitively? Harker's Jesse Gifford is a sadly demoralized man, a champion broncobuster put out of action with a broken pelvis. Shirley, his wife, has given up on their slide into the rural underclass, and gone off with big Keno McLaughlin, leaving Jesse with the two boys, Ethan (12) and little George. Descending even to a suicide attempt, Jesse is slowly restored, through the courageous loyalty of Ethan, to faith in himself, to a comeback on the rodeo circuit, and to the winning back of his wife. Chetwynd's conception of Jesse, elaborated in several newly written scenes, turns him into a hollow, bullying brute, vain, noisy, and stupid. His recovery is rendered as a moral transformation into an unoppressive, tender, liberated broncobuster, who respects Shirley's personhood and tells Ethan, 'Son, there's more than one way to be a man.' Message.

Each time the screenwriter presumes to improve on Harker's writing, the result is lamentable, tending towards sentimental moralizing. Thus, for instance, Jesse-on-screen mumbles a pre-suicide prayer in the "Gee, God, I guess what I'm doing is wrong, but don't punish my boys" vein; Harker's Jesse would have died first! Towards the end of the film, when the boys are coping with a dirt ranch they've bought, and

Harvey Hart

Jesse is in hospital with a broken leg, Shirley visits him and brings out a pack of cards. In the book they play cribbage, but the film has to give us a game of rummy, and a meaning-laden conversation about needing one more card to complete the set. And on the level of trivial but telling detail, these Alberta ranchers are said to go into Estevan for their Saturday night boozing – a round trip of several hundred miles, to the far side of Saskatchewan. The film was made for U.S. television.

When it comes to acting, the most pervasive distortion of Harker's novel can be described as a shift of *accent.* Imagine the incongruity of a Quebecois movie with Parisian accents, or of **Mean Streets** in Cockney. Tony Lobianco, the Italo-American star of **Goldenrod,** brings Arkansas to Alberta, and calls his son 'Bowah!' Gloria Carlin as Shirley contributes the voice and acting style of country and western movies, while the canny old J.T. Jones speaks in a strange and unstable dialect invented by Do-

nald Pleasence. This confusion of accents is not merely a superficial flaw, but expresses the central falseness of the movie. These people have nothing to do with each other, and nothing to do with Alberta.

Ethan and George (Will Darrow McMillan and Ian McMillan) steal the show – George with his stubby-nosed cuteness, and Ethan with a strongly felt and affecting performance as Jesse's faithful daughter and sweetheart. Yes, truly. For all his gutsy determination in winning the boys' prize at the stampede and fighting to save the ranch, Ethan's tearfully loving fidelity to a wayward father puts him in the place of Cordelia and Florence Dombey. He imparts a greater sincerity to all the scenes in which he appears, and creates the moving power of the final moments of Shirley's return home. The spectacle of reconciliation works its magic once again.

Robert Fothergill

The Far Shore

Director Joyce Wieland

d. Joyce Wieland, **sc:** Bryan Barney from an original script by Joyce Wieland, **ph.** Richard Leiterman, **ed.** George Appelby, Brian French, Judy Steed, Joyce Wieland, **sd. ed.** Marcel Potier, Rod Haykin, Mel Lovell **m.** Douglas Pringle, **l.p.** Celine Lomez, Lawrence Benedict, Frank Moore, Sean McCann, Cosette Lee, Don le Gros, Leo Leyden, Murray Westgate, Charlotte Blunt, Susan Petrie, Aviva Gerson, David Bolt, Colette Sharp, Dianne Lawrence, Jill Galer, Janet Doherty, Rachel Barney, Keith Craig, special appearance: Jean Carignan, **exec. p.** Pierre Lamy, **p.** Judy Steed, **p. man** Marilyn Stonehouse, Louise Ranger, **p.c.** The Far Shore Inc., 1975 **col.** 35 m.m. **dist.** Astral, **running time** 1 hour 37 minutes.

Until her heroine dove into a northern Ontario lake, fully clothed in billowing chiffon and Sunbonnet Sue chapeau, Joyce Wieland had an intriguing love drama going for her in **The Far Shore.**

The lady in the lake struck out for the far shore and her artist lover and made it, but the movie sank just about then with no hope for rescue because director Wieland decided to change forces in mid-stream.

Instead of continuing a tense, uneasy suspense in the story of a woman reaching out for freedom from a domineering, insensitive husband, **The Far Shore** suddenly turned into a farce. It became a silent movie comedy with a chase scene that Mack Sennett – as a Canadian – could have been proud of, but which Ms Wieland should not be unless she really intended it to be funny.

I don't think she did. It just turned out that way as husband and friend in one canoe chased wife and her lover in another, dodging and backtracking through scenic Canadian countryside to the accompaniment of finger-tripping piano straight out of nickelodeon beginnings. I was ready to believe this to be the most embarrassing sequence in a film from which better things were anticipated due to its advance reputation.

But then came an even more shattering scene, one from which I wanted to hide, even in the darkness of the Vox Theatre in Cannes. Ahead of me sat two German critics whose laughter at everything I was trying to take seriously had annoyed me immensely. But now I found their reaction was contagious as Ms. Wieland threw non-obligatory sex into **The Far Shore** in the most far-fetched coupling ever dreamed up for the screen.

Celine Lomez and Frank Moore, their blood boiling hot after months of repressed love for each other, finally release their feelings in the icy waters of that familiar lake. Off come the longjohns and the petticoats while she and he tread water.

The love-making is prolonged and passionate and the bluer they turn in the water, the more frantic the action, until, like a couple of exhausted fish, they climax and everything is over but the laughter. It was at this point I decided Ms. Wieland really did have a sense of humor.

But she did not have an artist's vision of the cinematic canvas she was attempting to cover with realism. Although Richard Leiterman's cinematography brings to the screen a colorful recreation of the rugged beauty of painter Tom Thompson – about whom **The Far Shore** is supposedly concerned – Ms. Wieland's direction is romantically uncertain. She also has cast in black and white. The heroine's husband is obvious from the start, a snob and a bore, a businessman who buys what he needs and needs nothing he can't buy. So there's never any doubt that there'll be trouble when his Debussy-playing wife and poetic hermit Tom find themselves on the same wavelength. Yet there is no real struggle. The conflict is basic and simplistic, not even imaginative.

Even so Ms. Wieland delivers a beautiful picture whose flaws show up only when one gets too close. The most attractive image in **The Far Shore** is Miss Lomez, whose dark sensuous features are reminiscent of both Genevieve Bujold and Carole Laure. If **The Far Shore** does nothing else, it brings to the screen another Canadian actress whose talent still has to be measured but whose star quality already is evident.

Les Wedman

Joyce Wieland

Brethren

Director Dennis Zahoruk

To be reviewed
in **Cinema Canada** issue no. 33

La tête de Normande St-Onge

Director Gilles Carle

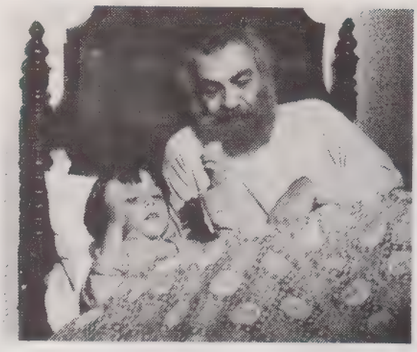
Reviewed in **Cinema Canada** no. 24
by Ronald H. Blumer

Gilles Carle

Lies My Father Told Me

Director Jan Kadar

Reviewed in **Cinema Canada** no. 22
by Connie Tadros



Partis pour la gloire

Director Clement Perron

Reviewed in **Cinema Canada** no. 25
by Carmel Dumas

Second Wind

Director Don Shebib

Reviewed in **Cinema Canada** no. 27
by Clive Denton

canadian film awards quiz

*For Canadian Film Award freaks, **Cinema Canada** offers a bound volume of nos. 21-30 to the person submitting the most correct answers to our CFA Quiz. Answers must be submitted before Dec. 5, 1976 and will be announced in issue no. 34. Good luck! **Cinema Canada,** Box 398, Outremont Station, Montreal.*

1. The first Canadian Film Awards were held in 1948. What film was chosen Film of the Year?
2. What former provincial premier has won an Etrog?
3. Three actresses have twice been chosen Best Actress. Can you name them?
4. What year did Claude Jutra first win a Film Award?
5. Only one man has won Film Awards both as an Actor and for Film of the Year. Who is he?
6. Only one man has twice won Film of the Year. Who is he?
7. How many Film Awards have Crawley Films won?
8. Name the 4 films which won Awards and later went on to win Oscars.
9. In 1966, a film based on the making of a film was chosen in the General Information category, while the original film was selected in the Travel & Tourism category. What were the films?
10. Why is the Etrog so named, and what year was it first presented?
11. How many years has Gerald Pratley been Chairman of the Film Awards Jury?
12. What two prominent European directors subsequently came back to Canada to make films here, after having served on the juries of Canadian Film Awards?
13. Who are the people in the photo p. 9 and what are they doing when?

the testing ground

While many eyes are on Toronto and the Awards, the majority of Canadians are still out in the 'regions' oblivious or indifferent to the fancy goings-on. During Atlantic Film Week (Sept. 28-30), Connie Tadros had a chance to visit the Atlantic Regional Studio of the National Film Board and wonders about the implications of the regionalization program.

by Connie Tadros

Truck; why not deport the English?

What business is it of the National Film Board of Canada to become the spearhead of a movement in the Atlantic regions to turn people on to filming, to fund local filming co-ops, to set up an editing table in the basement of the Federal Building in Charlottetown? What business has the NFB getting into a "continuing working relationship" with Memorial University – which seems to have cornered the market on filming hardware in Newfoundland anyway. Why did it fly in Verna Fields and screen **American Graffiti** and **Jaws** – two films which she has editited – in order to entice people to come to Halifax and talk about filming? What is "regionalization" all about anyway?

"In 1970," says Rex Tasker, executive producer of the NFB Atlantic Regional, "we had a big austerity crisis and we felt that the National Film Board was in serious danger of either being abolished or cut down radically. That created great turmoil..." After analyzing what had gone wrong at the Board and trying to foresee what the future could promise, Tasker and others hit upon the idea of regionalization. A few years later he made a concrete proposal to the NFB and moved to Halifax to open up the studio which is now three years old.

In fact, when one analyzes the activities of the Atlantic office, it does look like the model which is being suggested in studies to reorient the NFB in general. The training program is there; Tasker is working with a restricted number of filmmakers, giving them enough experience to qualify them professionally. The involvement with the exhibition of non-NFB films is apparent in several of its programs. And certainly, the trial of the computer distribution system echoes the will of the NFB to become the clearing house for certain kinds of Canadian films other than those produced by the CBC.

The accomplishments of the studio are well outlined by Tasker (see box). In Halifax, no one seems to question the appropriateness of the Board's involvement in the nascent filming communities... except, perhaps, the few people involved in private film companies.

An Overview

Because of the distances involved, filming in the four Atlantic provinces is an isolated undertaking. In all, there are three functioning production companies: ABS Productions in Dartmouth which does some commercial work and provides post-production sound services; Cal Film Productions which owns Eastern Film Labs in Halifax and has opened a second lab in Moncton; and Fiddlehead Productions in Fredericton, 99% of whose work consists of sponsored films for the New Brunswick government. Then there is Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland, whose Media Section, Extension Service, seems to be the best equipped, most active and longest-lived film crew around, thanks to its early involvement with the NFB's Challenge for Change. Add two co-ops (one in Halifax and one in St. John's, Newfoundland), a few film crews for local CBC and CTV news services, an isolated filmmaker or two, and that's filmmaking in the Atlantic Provinces. Minus the NFB.

The NFB

Tasker would like to avoid institutionalizing the relationships he is building with other groups and organizations in the regions. "There's a fine line between the sort of family thing we've had going, on the one hand, and the *organization* on the other... We've got to find a way somewhere in between because one is paternalistic or patronizing and the other is the *system* again." And that is indeed the challenge. How can the Board grow and flourish without dominating all filming activity in the region?

Tasker's goal is to "open new doors and treat people reasonably, intelligently and sympathetically". He relies on feedback to keep his filmmakers in touch with the people, and trusts that this will keep their work pertinent.

The Production

From the ten-odd films screened in Halifax, the production is generally competent, locally oriented and sane. The NFB films are useful films as the titles **(The Islanders, Halifax Music, Tara's Mulch Garden)** denote. The most imaginative film (not to say the most subversive) was **Truck** by Robert Awad which combined animation and a performance by its screenwriter Jules Bourdereau, which made for a quick, crazy little film about a man, his truck and *les maudits anglais*. The most worthy films were the ones which used archival material to trace the history of the region. **The Islanders** by Brian Pollard uses old stills and drawings to recapture the early days of the settlers, shipbuilders and fishermen of Prince Edward Island. Kent Martin has just finished an hour-long documentary, **Moses Coady,** which tells the story of a zealous Cape Breton priest who was responsible for the foundation of the co-operative movement in the Maritimes.

The film co-ops got together for an evening of screenings as well, and, though the films seldom lacked imagination, the scripts were weak and the production values low. Only two filmmakers seemed in control of their work. **Watercolor** by Richard Davies was a brief, graceful study of swans made interesting by the play of light and color. John Brett had two films, **Two Brothers** and **Voices From a Landscape,** which documented the life on a southern Nova Scotia island where a handful of Acadians settled long ago and now eke out an existence. Brett's inquisitive mind and willingness to get involved with his subjects made the films lively and coherent. But, all in all, if the co-ops where in competition with the NFB, the Board would win hands down. Which simply raises the question once again: what is the goal of the regional studios and what should their involvement with the film communities in the regions be?

The Week

It was interesting to me that given the Atlantic Film Week and the chance to get to know the region, the Board, and its filmmakers better, the in-house meetings of the NFB which took place during the week were closed to observers. I should have liked to sit in when the commissioner told the staff members of the NFB that funds for regional production will soon be considerably increased. And then there was a regional production meeting involving heads of departments from Montreal and regional representatives from as far away as Vancouver. What better chance to find out what was really going on!

Alas, the only open meeting was one where members of the Atlantic distribution services and the film officers described their functions. The office is sponsoring a series of programs of Canadian films, both features and shorts, NFB and independent, throughout the region at cut rates: a sort of mobile cinémathèque. The seven distribution offices within the region are brought together through a lively *Atlantic Newsletter* written at the NFB which contains film news from all sectors of the community. These offices are also experimenting with a system of computerized distribution which the Board will adopt across the country if the trial is successful. This meeting gave rise to the only argument I heard during my stay; one which merits attention.

Medoonak the stormmaker; the re-enacting of an Indian myth

The Argument

One of the protagonists was missing: the color control officers from the Montreal office. About three years ago it was decided that only one color control would be used at the Board, and since the NFB (Montreal), and the CBC have installed modern, cool-light zenon projectors, as have most of the commercial movie theatres, all prints are balanced for zenon projectors. The only trouble is that few people in the Atlantic provinces – including the NFB – have a zenon projector. The same prints, seen through a hot-light tungsten projector, are "warm"; faces become magenta and certain films become disagreeable to watch. Try **Halifax Music,** for example. The technical officer who brought the subject up chided the distribution officers for agreeing to circulate such inappropriate prints.

In Lieu of Conclusions, Questions

This problem is of real importance to the users of NFB films. The local schools and libraries will not convert their projectors in the foreseeable future and will have to put up with less than perfect prints.

But it is also symbolic and raises the question of whether the NFB is ready to reorganize itself to render service to the regions. Or are the regional offices to serve as a stopgap, a lifesaver for the Board which is being seriously challenged?

What did seem clear was that, despite the goodwill and enthusiasm of the Atlantic Regional office, the federal filmmaking policy is hardly clarified by the creation of NFB regional offices. Should the regional offices be soliciting sponsored films when the Tompkins report recommends that the NFB get out of the sponsored field? Should they be training filmmakers when the graduates from present film schools can not find work? Should they be adding to the mass of governmental productions already made at the CBC and seen on television when there is no evident willingness on the part of the CBC to buy films made in the private sector? One can only hope that a film policy will soon be forthcoming which will deal with these questions. □

NFB Atlantic Regional Office

Rex Tasker

The Atlantic Region Production Unit of the National Film Board of Canada was established in Halifax, N. S., in April, 1973.

The main aim of the studio was threefold – to make good films about or relevant to the four provinces; to provide an opportunity for local filmmakers to develop and work without leaving their home provinces; to do whatever possible to create a vigorous film/video community.

Three years later we can point to the following results:

Eighteen films completed and twelve in production. (All of them directed by residents of the Atlantic Region.)

Co-production of a special CBC network TV 'themed evening', *Atlanticanada,* followed by a NFB/CBC 90-minute live audience response telecast in the Maritimes.

The establishment of a Video Theatre open to the community at large. One of the objects of the Board's involvement in small-guage video is to explore its technical limits, and one production received a French-language network telecast, again followed by audience feedback.

Permanent editing rooms have been set up in Charlottetown, PEI and Saint John, N.B.

A continuing working relationship has been developed with both Memorial University Extension Service in St. John's, Newfoundland, and CBC, Halifax.

Financial help and advice have been given to the newly established film co-ops in Halifax and St. John's.

Formal training has been given to eight local filmmakers, all of whom are now working consistently in production. In addition, another 15-20 freelancers have been employed in various capacities.

Extensive help and advice has been given to schools, universities, community groups and both federal and provincial government departments.

Establishment of a regional chapter of the SMPTE.

The regular publication (with the Distribution Department) of a regional film/video newsletter.

The organization of an Atlantic Film Week, an intensive get-together of regional film people, other NFB regional studio representatives, and heads of departments of NFB in Montreal.

Introduction of a NFB/CBC Atlantic Films TV show in January 1977. Each program will be followed by audience feedback.

Outside the Board's own jurisdiction, new film labs have been set up in Moncton and Charlottetown, and a sound studio is in operation in Dartmouth, N. S.

Various provincial government departments are now starting to fund more films than previously.

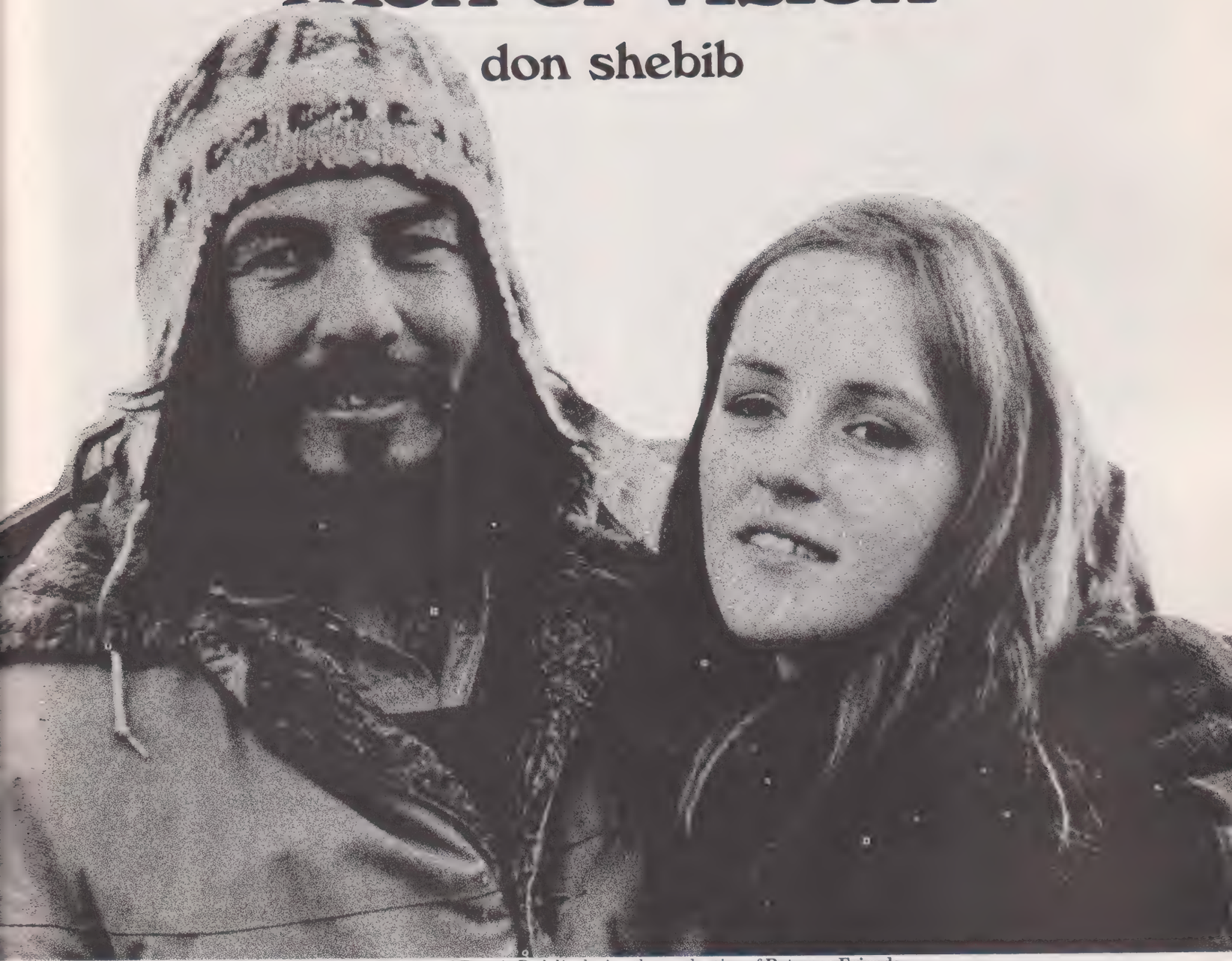
All in all, we are pleased with our results to date but, in the future, we hope to do better.

Rex Tasker
Executive Producer
NFB Atlantic Region

by Peter Harcourt

men of vision

don shebib



Don Shebib and Bonnie Bedelia during the production of **Between Friends**

It is ironic that the feeling of irrelevance which runs through Don Shebib's films should have made him one of Canada's best and most pertinent filmmakers. Peter Harcourt speaks of these films – both features and short films – and of Shebib's development.

"There are lots of films that I'd like to make in the States. I'd like to make a film there every couple of years. But basically, I'd really prefer to make films here. If I did leave, it would be like taking a fish out of water. I think that I seem to thrive on the water that I swim in, which is where I am, in Toronto."

– Don Shebib at the Art Gallery of Ontario, 1975

Towards the end of **Second Wind** (1976), there is a tiny moment of some importance. Roger is out on one of his early morning runs, jogging along the Beaches. Apart from his running, things have not been going well for him. His friends have quarrelled with him, his wife has left him, and even his career as a stockbroker seems somewhat in jeopardy. During this particular run, he pauses for a minute to walk onto a jetty and look out across the lake. It is a quiet moment in the film, a speechless moment, the actual significance of which remains unspecified. There is nothing within the context of this sequence to tell us exactly what Roger may be thinking. His face expresses nothing precisely. Yet, helped by the music, such a moment creates a feeling of inwardness, of self-reflection – as if he is weighing up the values of his life.

I single out this moment for a number of reasons. Partly because, as it doesn't directly advance the narrative, it may have been scarcely noticed by a number of viewers; but largely because it relates to other moments in nearly all of Shebib's films, and also to a similar moment in this film as well. During the opening sequence of the cocktail party given in Roger's honor – a celebration of his promotion to vice president of the company he is working for – there is a similar moment of mute attentiveness.

As Roger seems ill at ease with the party, indeed with his own success, he goes off alone into the board room and looks out a window down onto the cityscape below. This too is a quiet moment, an introspective moment; but the context of the party encourages more precision in our speculations. Surely, there must be something more, Roger's face seems to be saying – something that is more difficult, something that will truly challenge him. Successful though he is, he seems aware of an absence, of something not there. He craves the risks of an actual challenge. He feels not fully stretched in the world as it is.

This feeling of emptiness, of restlessness, often of irrelevance, pervades the films of Don Shebib – not only his features but much of his other work as well. And this feeling is often conveyed without the help of words.

In **We've Come a Long Way Together**, a film on old people made for OECA in 1974, though stretched by his producers to twice the length that Shebib wanted it to be, there is much the same kind of feeling that we find in his features. For the most part, nowadays, old people are displaced persons. Society gives them no meaningful role to play. They have to be institutionalized, organized, "entertained" – not *that* much unlike Roger in his successful, middle-class life within the institutionalized routine of his middle-class job. The rules are all external. One tries to "have fun" within whatever conditions are offered.

In **We've Come a Long Way Together**, while these people do have fun – dancing to Guy Lombardo's "When I grow to old to dream..." or playing their small drums and toy trumpets in their own "spasm" band – Shebib counterbalances these scenes of organized activity with scenes of inescapable loneliness. There is a quiet shot (again, not unlike that early shot of Roger) of an old man by himself looking out of a window; and there are repeated cuts to a shot of an old man walking towards us from a distance – almost like a warning.

These are the moments that give the film its predominant tone, that create the mood we take away with us – whatever apparently cheerful things the people manage to say. Old age leads to isolation and loneliness, to social irrelevance; and this is a fate that moves towards us all.

This feeling of irrelevance is perhaps *the* central feeling within all Shebib's features as it is as well within his most distinguished short, **Good Times, Bad Times** – a film on war veterans made for the CBC in 1969. **Good Times, Bad Times** is also about old people, but about old people who once had a most important role to play – winning our wars. For those of us privileged enough to be aware of European cinema, this film could usefully be compared with Georges Franju's **Hôtel des Invalides** (1951) or Alain Resnais' **Nuit et brouillard** (1955) – films which Shebib may or may not have seen. But whatever the upshot of such a comparison, **Good Times, Bad Times** is as distinguished in its own way as any film can be.

Its distinction resides in the balance of its structure, in the interweaving of elements that pull us in different directions. These elements, of course, are indigenous to the theme of the film as they are indigenous to war; but Shebib organizes them in a highly original way.

For most people, the experience of war is the most horrible that they can undergo. At the same time, for those who survive it, this shared horror creates an extraordinary sense of comradeship, of unquestionable purposefulness. As the voice of a veteran explains in the film: "The comradeship of soldiers is a kind of love," a love that comes about when "you've lived together, slept together, gone on leave together, died together."

The boys get together in **Good Times, Bad Times**

Good Times, Bad Times intercuts interviews with veterans with "found" footage of both the world wars. Some of the footage is optically stretched – each frame double-printed to give it the ghostly effect of slow-motion, as if from some nightmare imperfectly remembered. Both through scenes of actual violence and through a sense of violence created in the editing, the found footage conveys to us the actual horrors of war. Meanwhile we have sequences of the veterans themselves – the survivors – sometimes in one of their clubs, drinking down beer to-

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gether and singing the old war songs, reminding themselves of the "good times" of intense comradeship, of the days when they really felt useful and united as a group. They tend to forget the "bad times", as one of them explains, because of this sense of comradeship, because of the sense of dignity bestowed upon them by the war.

Just as the visuals intercut present-day footage with archival material, so the sound track draws upon bits of music (itself also sometimes "stretched") from Holst's *The Planets,* from Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings,* and from a rock group known as Iron Butterfly. This music contrasts sharply both with the veterans' own singing and with Bing Crosby singing that ultimately absurd song for a war against the Germans, "Auf wiedersehen, my dear!"

A more extended study of the films of Don Shebib could spend a lot of time on the intricacies of this film – not only on the intricacies of the way it has been put together but also on the intricacies of its ultimate meaning. For who, finally, won the war? Certainly not the people who fought it, who experienced the intense emotions of being at the front. At one point towards the end of the film, we see an end-of-war rally in Trafalgar Square in London and we hear the legendary sound of Big Ben. Then, as we see shots of soldiers marching away, as so often in this film the commentary draws upon some lines from an extended poem by Joyce Cary, *Marching Solders,* which he wrote just at the end of the Second World War:

> March, march, soldiers, follow away.
> We do not belong among these peaceful houses.
> Our foreheads are marked with a sign, we have looked at death too long,
> Within our eyes his picture sits. March, march, soldiers,
> For those who fear that face will put their curse upon us,
> Those whom we set free will pay us with hatred,
> Because we are guilty of action, of war, of blood.

These lines are accompanied by the plaintive sounds of Barber's *Adagio,* creating a rich emotion difficult to describe – a fusion of exhilaration plus a sense of loss, a movement into accusation and uselessness.

As the film began with the playing of our (then) national anthem over shots of old coins and little statuettes of soldiers, so it ends with an old veteran singing in his cracked but proud voice, "God Save the Queen." But that is not all. In a way that speaks for this old man personally but which might also sum up the feelings of a good many soldiers, of people who recognize that they have served their purpose, he then says: "Thank you very much. I'm all tired out. Now you can put me to sleep."

* * *

All of Shebib's subsequent work might seem like a development of elements contained within this magnificent short film: the great value he places on male comradeship; his enormous skill as an editor; his intense feeling for the need of real challenges to give individuals a sense of their dignity; and finally (in spite of the "jock" sensibility he likes to put forward in his interviews) (1), his intimate feeling both for poetry and music. This is a feeling that he tries to put to one side, as if, as a Canadian, it wouldn't be "manly" to let it seem prominent. But it is there in the films nevertheless, both in direct and indirect ways.

When I first saw **Goin' Down the Road** when it came out in 1970, I was somewhat perplexed by the role that the music of Erik Satie played in the film. It seemed out of context and therefore pretentious. I now know I was wrong. The context that justifies it is partly provided by the other films that Shebib has made but also by elements within the film itself.

As even most Canadians know by now, **Goin' Down the Road** tells the story of two lads from the Maritimes who set out for the big city, to cash in on the stylish life of the economic centre of this strangely disunited country we refer to as Canada. Of course, they don't make it. The entire enterprise ends in disaster, leaving them with less at the end than they had at the beginning. But there are moments of hope along the way.

Pete and Joey are pals, real comrades in the way that Shebib believes in; but they are also very different kinds of guys. While they are both typical members of the *lumpenproletariat* – unskilled workers with no sense of the political implications of the role that society has assigned to them – Pete has a more reflective quality. He tries to think about things. Clumsy though his articulations may be (for language, among other things, is really the property of the middle class), he is dumbly aware that life for other people offers something more, something that he wants access to. Sometimes this sense expresses itself simply in crude, "jock" ways, when he covets Nicole's resplendent "knockers" as she struts about the Wilson pop factory, tantalizing all the workers but available to none of them. Yet at other times, Pete's awareness expresses itself in more refined ways.

This is where the music of Satie comes in. One night, when the boys are out on the town, doing the Yonge Street strip, they stroll into Sam's to pick up some records – country & western (obviously), probably from the Maritimes – the kind of music that speaks to the culture they spring from. But Pete notices a well-dressed young woman walking upstairs. He follows her up there towards the classical section where she listens, for a moment, to one of Satie's **Gymnopédies**. While it is still the scent of sex that is driving him on, there is something in her style and in the style of the music that represents to Pete the world he is excluded from – the world of the cultivated, well-to-do, middle-class. This is the world that allows for contemplation, that provides the leisure for us to find the words to define our feelings – a help towards determining our place in the world. At another point in the film, while having a beer with Joey, Pete is pushed into some kind of articulateness about his feeling of uselessness, about his feeling of "alienation", of *Verdinglichung* (as Marx himself would say).

Pete's words all fumble, but his understanding is just. They are talking about salaries, and Pete begins to reckon up the number of cases of ginger ale they have stacked since they began work. "304,000 cases each," Pete finally works out. But there is nothing to show for it. Joey can't understand what he is talking about. He cannot think beyond the weekly pay package of $80, which is more than they ever got in the Maritimes. But Pete wants something more. "I wanna do something that matters," as he finally puts it, "something that shows for myself, that says I was there. Peter McGraw was there." This is what his work, his life, his whole sensibility have conspired to deny him. And Pete is vaguely aware that this all has to do with a style of life that involves listening to music and reading books.

During another day, when Pete and Joey and their two girls are over at the island, the girls "yacking" on and with their hair up in curlers, Pete is struck by another middle-class lady absorbed in a book. "Reality" must be somewhere, this sequence seems to be saying, but not in what is happening at the moment. Yet Pete can find no way of effectively changing anything.

When everything has failed, after Joey has married his "knocked-up" Bets and they are now both out of work, Pete returns from his job at a bowling alley and puts on that Satie record, as if as a reminder of the world they are excluded from. This is the moment of greatest inwardness in the film, once we have come to realize just what that Satie means to Pete and to the world of culturally dispossessed people that Shebib has created for us. As the music plays, we cut from tired face to tired face, each one registering something personal yet nothing precisely. Like Roger's look out from that jetty in **Second Wind**, like many of the old veterans or the inhabitants of the old people's home, there is the sense here as so often in Shebib that what the characters are feeling lies too deep for words.

* * *

Setting off to find a new lifestyle in **Rip Off**

Since **Goin' Down the Road**, Shebib has failed to achieve quite the same degree of critical or commercial success, although I cannot understand why. If, on the level of narrative, both **Rip Off** (1971) and **Second Wind** seem comparatively slight films, **Between Friends** (1973) certainly is not. In any case, whatever individual reviewers might have decided are the "faults" of Shebib's various films, I would argue that they are all important – important both in helping us understand the particular qualities within the films of Don Shebib but also in understanding something about the world we live in, the world we live in as Canadians.

If **Goin' Down the Road** had as its subject (as Robert Fulford put it) "rootlessness, the sense of pointlessness, the sense that no job is worth doing and no relationship worth developing" (2), the same subject can be found in Shebib's next two films. If Pete and Joey's escape to the mythological promises of Upper Canada was a kind of pilgrimage that led nowhere, so the young kids in **Rip Off** also set out on a journey that leads to divisiveness and despair, interfering even with the "comradeship" that had held them together.

The kids are quite well off – like so many North American kids. But there seems nothing *real* that they can do. "There isn't anything left to discover. What a bummer!" as one of them exclaims one day, while they are lying around in an old barn reading about the voyages of Captain Cook; and their efforts to achieve an identity within the high school that encases them, whether through founding a rock band or by trying to make it with the girls, are either ridiculous or humiliating – generally both. But the accident of Michael's "inheritance" – a piece of land up north – and their decision to found a commune there finally gives them an identity – at least for a while. But this too comes to nothing and they return home in defeat.

The rootless protagonists of **Goin' Down the Road**

The penultimate scene involves a confrontation between Michael and his father – perhaps a bit implausible in terms of characterization but right, nevertheless, in terms of the emotional rhythm of the film. This is the first time that Michael actually sees his father as a person and gets some sense of the forces in life that have formed him. Furthermore, in a typically Shebibian way, Michael's response to his father's stories about the hardship of his own youth is more visual than verbal. This means that we, the audience, have to decide what Michael may be thinking. Does he partly envy his father for having had so few choices to make in life – rather like the veterans who had to fight in the war? Or is it more a frightening vision about what adult life might be – a lonely routine of unimaginative drudgery, just to earn a living, just to stay alive? What is fine about this film as about other films by Don Shebib is that we have to work at these questions by ourselves.

The film ends on a moment of romantic nostalgia. Most of the boys have graduated and, except for Steve (the "Joey" of this film) who accepts an early marriage and a life of common labor, they are going on to university – largely because there is nothing else to do. There is a great feeling of futurelessness, as a long lens and slow-motion photography idealizes the kids throwing about a football, as if in this way trying to prolong the carefree, if aimless, irresponsibility of their youth. And like so many Canadian films, this sense of futurelessness is consolidated technically by the final freeze-frame. Like Pete and Joey, these kids, while better off, still have no sense of where they are going.

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In spite of a fine tribute from Robert Fulford (3), **Between Friends** has not enjoyed either the commercial or critical acclaim of Shebib's first feature. This is truly astonishing because, in many ways, it is his most complex

achievement. Skimming over his work in this way, I can only point to a few distinguished details; yet these details define the sensibility that informs the whole film.

In his public statements, Don Shebib is his own worst publicity agent. He is always complaining that his scripts are weak or that he has had difficulties with his actors – to my mind, a rather undergraduate thing to do. The obvious sense of superiority and detached indifference that, in **Between Friends**, Michael Parks brought to his role as Toby, while it may have caused Shebib some annoyance at the time of shooting, I believe contributes forcefully to his effectiveness in the film. Toby (a bit like Pete) is a kind of dreamer. He has had a life and lost it and he now drifts into things – whether into an ill-conceived robbery or into an affair with the wife of his former best friend.

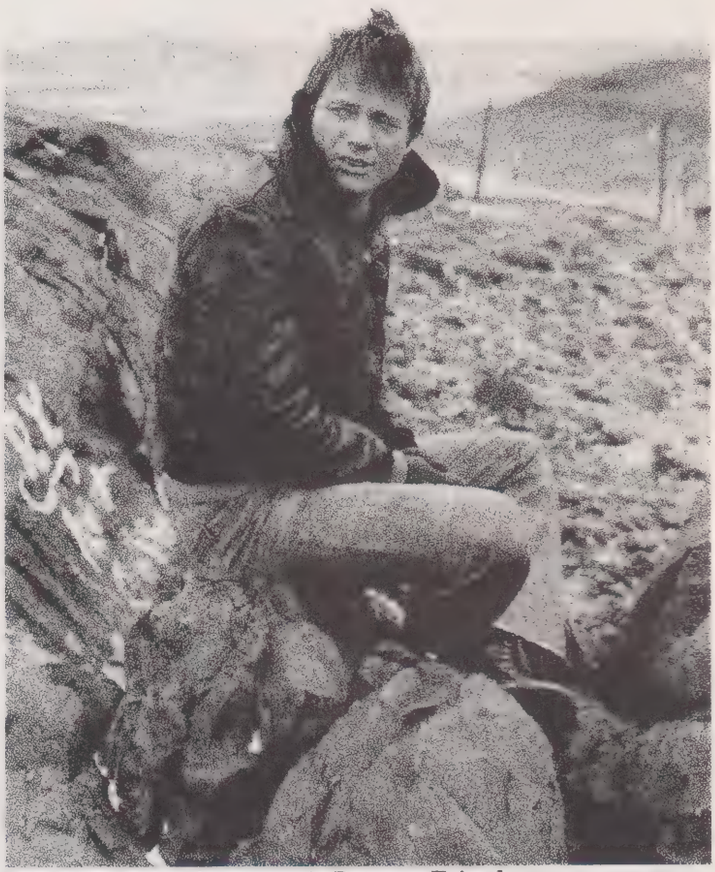
In this way, Toby seems detached from the implications of his own actions. The only signs of true emotion are related to his past – either his prestigious past as super-surfer or his lost relationship with Michael, his young son. He seems to have been closer to that privileged world of "higher culture" which, in **Goin' Down the Road**, Pete seemed to be longing for; yet he has given it up – for reasons we never fully understand. He is more intelligent and more sensitive than his crude friend, Chino. Yet he doesn't seem to care. And this lack of caring, this sense that there is now nothing to live for, brings about (as much as Chino's rage) the failure and separateness of the end – isolated figures within a snowy landscape, Ellie with her dead father, Toby with his dead friend.

Like many Canadian films, all Shebib's films are rich in their feeling for landscape; but none more so than **Between Friends**. If, in **Second Wind**, Toronto looks prosperous, beautiful, and suburbanly humane, in both **Goin' Down the Road** and in **Between Friends**, it has a far more hostile atmosphere. Especially in **Between Friends**, Toronto seems a place of chilly piers where shady deals are arranged, of grubby little restaurants and impersonal supermarkets where both Chino and Ellie eke out their dreary, minimal-wage existences. And the scenes up around Sudbury where the robbery takes places (in Coniston, actually) are even more powerful in the wintry impersonality of their bleak expressiveness. Slag heaps and lonely chimneys dominate a number of the images, making the characters look small and inconsequential in comparison – mere items within an industrial superstructure within which they can play only mechanical roles. Unless they protest: stage a robbery: try to rip the system off. But even then, they fail.

Between Friends is a film of extraordinary tenderness, of intense compassion for all of its characters. Furthermore, with Bonnie Bedelia as Ellie, it offers the only sympathetically substantial female portrait that Shebib has so far given us. Yet even here, as in all Shebib's films, her role is to interfere with the strong male companionship that might have existed without her; so in this way, she too contributes to the destructiveness of the end.

Generally in Shebib's films, women are seen as objects – things you have sex with – whether the decorative housewife with her plants and suburban neighbors in **Second Wind** or the jaded flossies in **Between Friends** that Will (Ellie's father) and Coker make use of in their "love life." But Ellie is something more – more sensitive and more demanding. In this way, of course, within the Shebibian world, she is also more dangerous. She is more likely to disrupt the external projects of the men.

Yet the initial love-scene between Toby and Ellie is one of an exceptional tenderness. The men with their ladies are all downstairs, drinking and dancing and singing beery songs, when a sliver in Toby's finger gives Ellie an excuse to invite him upstairs – to take it out with a needle. She obviously feels apart from this drunken, raunchy fun; and her red maxi-dress, with the refined contours of her body detectable beneath it, lends a visual emphasis to this feeling of apartness, to our sense of her sensitivity. Once upstairs, for a while the rowdy singing is drowned out by a bit of opera on the radio – a section of Puccini's **La Bohème.** Like the bits of Satie in **Goin' Down the Road**, this classical music, along with Ellie's elegant red dress, places this scene apart from the majority of other scenes in the movie, as if aware of other values. It is placed in parenthesis (so to speak), as indeed it proves to be only a parenthesis in the characters' lives.



Toby, detached and separate, in **Between Friends**

Yet Shebib's own sensibility (whether consciously or not) picks up on these elements and introduces them again at later moments in the film – most effectively in the café scene just before the heist. While supposedly they are all working together – Ellie, Will, Toby, and Chino – they are all sitting apart from one another through the sadness and tension caused partly by Coker's death but largely by Chino's knowledge of Toby and Ellie's affair. Chino is delivering an angry monologue on the values of friendship – supposedly to the bartender, but actually in his self-pitying way to everyone else in the room. "It's bullshit, that's what it is," he finally cries out. Meanwhile, Ellie is sitting at the rear of the room, plunking out some little classical piece on a piano, the red light to the side of her casting a red glow on her hair, in this way providing a visual echo of her initial moment of tenderness with Toby. Finally Toby, who throughout the film has seemed directed towards the past, is speaking to his son in California on the telephone. "Do you want to hang up first? Or should I hang up first?" He is trying, as if for the last time, to re-create those playful games of domestic intimacy which he himself has lost.

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With repeated screenings, especially when seen in sequence, Don Shebib's films add up to an extraordinary achievement – a mixture of psychological uncertainty and artistic refinement, of boorishness and sensitivity, as indeed a lot of life is in Canada today. But at their centre, there is always the sense of something not there – some kind of challenge, some sense of cohesiveness, something never directly specified that might make life meaningful. This longing is scarcely present in the words his characters exchange: it is more in the way they look at one another or in the way they simply stare off into an empty space – especially the men. What are the qualities in life that hold people together, that might lead us collectively to a sense of identity or a feeling of purposefulness, a feeling of success? This is the question that, cumulatively, Shebib's films seem to ask.

In **Second Wind**, during that extended run with Pete in High Park where Roger is really beginning to discover his pace as a runner, Hagood Hardy's music gives to this moment something like the exhilaration of an American western (as when the settlers have beaten off the Indians and won their way through to the promised land). So too in **Between Friends**, Coker's funeral is rich in allusions to American culture. But it is an allusion to an absence.

In I don't know how many films by John Ford, we have seen a *community* of individuals singing together one of Ford's favorite songs, "We shall gather at the river" – the song helping to unite them as a group. At Coker's funeral, however, all the characters are isolated from one another, separated in extreme long-shot as we hear Will, at the top of his voice, *all by himself,* singing out that very same song:

> We shall gather at the river,
> That flows past the throne of God.

This is a moment of great power in the film, just as it is; but if we pick up on the allusion (probably unintended by Shebib himself), it becomes more powerful still, with referents valid not only within the film but within our whole culture as well.

There may be all kinds of "faults" in Don Shebib's films – psychological implausibilities or clumsy bits of dialogue that make too explicit moments that would be stronger left silent. Certainly, in terms of my own response, I feel this is true about Chino's suicidal attack on Toby during the very moment of the robbery in **Between Friends**, making too explicit his determination to bring about the destruction of them all. But I don't really care about these faults. There are all kinds of faults in Bergman and Antonioni films; but the films are important to us collectively because they add up to something more than any individual moment, be it strong or weak, in any particular film. Cumulatively, they speak to us as a whole.

This much I claim for Don Shebib; and I have only dealt with some of the films and have only begun to scratch the surface of the qualities that are there. Perhaps, as John Hofsess has asserted, Shebib is a Canadian who has outgrown Canada (4). Perhaps to develop, he will have to go elsewhere. Perhaps in **Second Wind** (as a friend of mine playfully suggested), Roger's lookout from that jetty really stands for Shebib himself, wondering if there is a place for him in the American industry! But whatever the ultimate answers to these speculations, Shebib's films are less about losers than they are about loners – like a good many Canadian films. And indeed, Canada is a country where there is very little sense of people working collectively together – especially in Toronto where everybody seems to be working against everybody else.

As I have argued elsewhere (5), perhaps too in such a culture, it is wrong for us to expect from our cinema the normative values of psychological realism and narrative tidiness – characteristics perhaps more germane to cultures that are more sure of themselves, where individual roles are more securely defined. If, at the present moment, the conditions of production and exhibition are unencouraging to the work of Don Shebib, it doesn't necessarily follow that it is *his* work that has to change. Perhaps we have to change these conditions that he works in, conditions which in any case are based on foreign models and controlled by foreign capital.

The films of Don Shebib add up to a statement about life that seems appropriate to us as Canadians. His characters, especially his men, all convey a vision of some better kind of life that might be possible elsewhere but *should* be possible here. Whether this is seen in class or cultural terms, this insight is real for us, for many of us, living here in Canada.

It is the search for this vision, however successful it may be in any particular film, that animates the work of Don Shebib as a filmmaker – whoever the writer and whoever the cameraman. And it is this sense of a search that unifies his work and gives it meaning – a meaning relevant to us as Canadians. □

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1. For instance, see the section on Don Shebib in *Inner Views: Ten Canadian Film-Makers,* by John Hofsess (Toronto, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1975), pp. 67-79.
2. In *Marshall Delaney at the Movies,* by Robert Fulford (Toronto, Peter Martin, 1974), p. 41.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.
4. "The End of the Road," by John Hofsess, in *Weekend Magazine* (Toronto) 28 Feb., 1976, pp. 16 ff.
5. See the Introduction to *Film Canadiana, 1975* (Ottawa, The Canadian Film Institute, 1976).

Acknowledgements

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Peter Harcourt

Don Shebib's
Filmography

1961: **The Train** (UCLA-17m). 1962: **The Duel** (UCLA-10m), **Joey** (UCLA-27m). 1963: **Revival** (UCLA-10m), **Reparation** (UCLA-17m). 1964: **Surfin'** (CBC-25m), **Eddie** (UCLA-40m), **Autumpan** (UCLA-60m). 1965: **Satan's Choice** (NFB-28m). 1966: **Search For Learning** (NFB-16m), **Allan** (CBC-22m), **David Sector** (CTV-14m), **Olympic Rider** (CTV-15m). 1967: **Basketball** (CBC-24m), **Everdale Place** (CTV-27m), **San Francisco Summer** (CBC-60m). 1968: **Unknown Soldier** (CBC-7m), **Stanfield** (CBC-20m), **Graduation Day** (CBC-8m). 1969: **Good Times, Bad Times** (CBC-35m). 1970: **Goin' Down the Road** (Evdon Films Ltd.-90m). 1971: **Rip Off** (Phoenix Films-90m). 1972: **Born Hustler** (CBC-25m). 1973: **Between Friends** (Clearwater Films-90m). 1974: **Winning Is the Only Thing** (CBC-22m), **We've Come A Long Way Together** (ETV-60m), **Deedee** (CBC-50m), **Gennaro** (CBC-50m). 1975: **The Canary** (CBC-50m), **Second Wind** (Olympic Films-90m).

an artisan in show biz:

claude fournier

Past president of the Quebec producers' association, Claude Fournier is one of the more influential voices these days in Quebec's filming circles; he strongly defends the notion of 'commercial' features. Carmel Dumas introduces us to the man and to his experiences.

by Carmel Dumas

Claude Fournier behind the camera a few years ago

The name of Claude Fournier used to elicit images of money, money, money. There was an indecent small-time Hollywood taste to the way he filmed his **Deux femmes en or** frolicking in soap suds out in Montreal suburbia, but this gentle combination of slapstick, humor and sexiness was to become Canada's greatest success at the box office, and the $250,000 production brought in an unprecedented $2.5 million in Quebec alone.

That was in 1970. Two years later, Fournier's image was to change with the making of **Alien Thunder**, his first – but what a first! – flop. Then came a little film in the old vein, **La pomme, la queue et les pépins** (1974) which was the only Quebecois film that year to recoup its costs, and now comes **Je suis loin de toi Mignonne**, opening in November in Quebec theatres.

An Artisan at Heart

Fournier learned many lessons from doing **Alien Thunder**, the most important being that filmmakers shouldn't be propelled into different styles. "I was an easterner who suddenly had to operate in the west..." A western film is one thing, a Quebecois film altogether another thing. On the one hand, there's the big-budget, big-name production, and on the other, the under-financed, under-crewed film that the ingenious filmmaker prevents from going under. This is where Claude Fournier has experience.

Quebec's severe film critics usually demand that film directors be committed to Quebec's political and social struggles, but in Fournier's case, they tend to bow to the clown. Although he is often tagged as a commercial filmmaker, he is more often said to be a "filmmaker without pretension."

But after **Alien Thunder,** "my first film in six to lose money", it wasn't easy to convince producers and investors that he hadn't been spoiled by the big time and that he could be satisfied with a small budget in exchange for the chance of doing another film.

"Confidence can build up pretty quickly, but it can die just as fast." Fournier got to learn that for himself. "People don't seem to grasp the fact that when you're a film director, you earn your living by directing films, expensive ones or cheap ones."

And Fournier pretty well earns his by directing features, although he fills in the money gap with a sponsored film here and there, usually for the provincial department of tourism. But there is a frustration in him as he feels himself getting old (he doesn't look it, but that's what he says), tired, but forced to keep doing most of his films by himself because it's the only way to make ends meet. And he's even more restless now, because he is convinced that no matter how many commercials or television films one directs, the only experience that counts in feature filmmaking is the actual making of feature films.

His experience is as an artisan. On most of his early features, he would be co-writer, cameraman, director, editor. He would use little tricks and quick thinking to fill in the budget gaps, and he would talk with affection in some interviews about his "rococo style." Then came **Alien Thunder**, starring Donald Sutherland and a million-dollar budget.

This is where Fournier found out the value of experience, the necessity for a filmmaker to live in a tradition that allows him to survive, and that gives him some assurance. Fournier found out how it feels in reality to be from Quebec rather than from Hollywood. "If I had had the experience of Hollywood, **Alien Thunder** would have had built-in protection. It's not that they have more genius or more money there, but they have a greater chance not to make mistakes. They have a tradition. Take a guy like Spielberg, when he made **Jaws.** He didn't have the chance to go wrong because around him, although he himself is young, there's the Establishment which has a considerable amount of experience that reflects on him."

So a very naive easterner went west to watch his $1,100,000 budget climb to $1,600,000 because of legal fees while investors kept arguing whether they would withdraw or not. Claude Fournier learnt the meaning of the word "entourage".

"I used to laugh at first when I would read 'Mr Sutherland and his entourage' in contracts, but by the end of the film I had stopped laughing." The trailer and the entourage of the big star create a psychological climate which is not at all suited to the artisan.

There are all sorts of costs that are inherent in the big-budget system about which Fournier had no idea. The financial costs are more or less routine, with the smaller star wanting a trailer and an entourage too, just to keep up.

The energy costs are often higher. Fournier, as is his habit with all scripts, thoroughly researched **Alien Thunder** (for two years) before shooting, but on the set he would end up discussing the psychology of an 1890 mountie, in view of the Vietnam War, with Sutherland who had his contract right to script approval and his own political convictions.

Good clean fun in **Deux femmes en or**

Carmel Dumas had her own column, "Youth Beat" at the Montreal Star *before moving to the CBC as researcher and director of "Quebec Now" and as researcher on "Daybreak." Currently she contributes to* Maclean's *and does theatre reviews for the* Montreal Gazette; *she has just finished her first novel,* **A la pige.**

"Already, when you're working with a big star, he's wielding the bigger bat – if you give him script approval, he's wielding the bigger bat *and* pulling all the strings."

Not that Sutherland seemed worse than any other "Establishment" actor, but a forewarned Fournier would have known that even the best of actors can only have a restricted view of a subject, often confined to his own character. A forewarned Fournier would have known that 10 percent of his budget would *inevitably* go into legal fees and that by starting late, lawyers could easily dispose of 20 percent of his budget. A forewarned Fournier wouldn't...

But he did. And from the star's right to approve, to the investor's right to approve (by divine right), the only thing that survives in the director is the desire to get that film out there on the screens. "Of course, at any point, you could just say keep it, kill it, I'm leaving... But after years of pressure, you still want the thing out..."

With **Mignonne** about to come out and another feature project with a writer from Toronto about to take off, the director of **Alien Thunder** is now proud to say that the best thing that came out of that film was the romance between Sutherland and Francine Racette.

Going English

For Fournier, **Je suis loin de toi Mignonne** ($354,000 budget) brought back the good times of **Deux femmes en or,** with small means and people having fun working hard.

The original idea of two sisters struggling not to become old spinsters while all the men are at war came from Dominique Michel and Denise Filiatrault. Dodo and Denise happen to be the slapstick duo *par excellence* of Quebec television, and when Fournier heard that their script had been turned down by the CFDC, he called producer Pierre David and said "I'll do it, no conditions." He almost regretted the "no conditions" pledge when he saw the work to be done on the script, because the two stars had no writing experience – but he had had "a flash of that whole package", and he just knew it would work.

Still, Fournier is getting tired of all the pressure. Doing the writing, the camera work, the editing, is getting to be too much, but he doesn't really see the way out, except that if Hollywood called him tomorrow he would go. "The only reason I'm still here is because they haven't called me," he jokes.

So although he would love to just write screenplays, to maybe direct one out of two, he goes on directing because that way he can survive in the film business.

"It's like with hockey. As long as there is no reserve, there is no chance to win. And here, in Canada, there's no film reserve. Sometimes I think the CFDC's $100,000-$200,000 first-feature budget is just more rope to hang yourself with. In Quebec, there's a market for roughly four or five purely indigenous films. You can then recuperate your money if you manage to grasp a certain reality. You don't make any money to speak of by translating these films. But it's a very restricted market and the Quebec filmmakers are realizing seriously that the market for Quebec films is doomed. People like myself, like Gilles Carle, like Denys Arcand, have no real urge to keep working in French, and soon we will find the CFDC financing English films that will be directed and written by French-Canadians."

"There used to be a semi-bonanza in the tax shelter money, but no investors will put money in French films now. English-Canadians who view the Quebec film industry as an enviable situation are living on the old myth of a boom that happened four years ago and that will not repeat itself. The CFDC is not going to finance films almost 100 percent for an indefinite period, and Odeon and Famous keep putting in their token contributions only because we twist their arms and it saves them a lot of flack."

"All Quebec directors have work in progress, a project they want to do and can't. So it's no longer a question of denying your market – you have to find people to invest in your films."

That's Show Biz

"There are three kinds of films: the blockbusters, the scrap, and the average films. There's a market for each of them. There's a list of stars that producers circulate. On the top, there are names like Geneviève Bujold and George Segal, names that mean blockbusters, names that equal: "out of your range." But there is a long list of names that equal sure television sales, and if you have a sure television sale you can't get screwed. But if you think in terms of $250,000, then you're out of the race completely. And I no longer want to be the one who pays the bill."

This is where Claude Fournier is under fire from the less commercially oriented wing of Quebec's film industry – "les politisés", as he says. But Fournier doesn't perceive the role of a filmmaker as in the least political, any more than he perceives the message as the aim of a film.

"There is a side of me that is very old-fashioned. There are few myths and dreams left in the world and I think that show biz is a big myth people don't want destroyed. Here, in Quebec, there is no tradition in the will to entertain. Too many people start off on the premise that nothing is more entertaining than themselves. Well, everybody has ideas and the most absolute art would be to get them across unnoticed, but I believe in the importance of pleasure, pleasure to see stars you think lead a happier life than you, pleasure to dream."

About someone like Jean-Claude Lord **(Bingo, Parlez-nous d'amour),** Fournier says he will soon find out that "it's tough to laugh at those people who make you live."

Fournier wants those people happy. Now, when he's editing, he doesn't look for opinions in the milieu. He invites theatre managers from the different regions and gets them to comment on the entertainment value of his work. "What they don't understand, the majority of your audience won't understand. They see a lot of films and don't discriminate for ideological reasons. And another advantage of screening for these regional theatre managers is that once your film comes around to their theatres, it rings a bell – it's not like another something or other out of nowhere."

"Political in a Film Way"

Claude Fournier is vice-president of the Quebec Film Producers Association, which some filmmakers view more as the big bad commercial world than the film world. Nonetheless, the association encompasses 45 film production companies which do 90 percent of all Quebec film production.

Fournier sees his role in the association as the normal " chipping into collective precaution," and to those who accuse him of not being political, he answers that he is "political in a film way, in the interest of the industry."

He thinks that, just like elsewhere in Quebec, there's "something rotten" in the employer-employee climate in the film world, a sort of "the least for the most" attitude that can only be straightened out by employers giving an example of "conscience professionnelle."

He can't go along with those who throw all the stones at the Americans. "In any case, if Quebec films were money-makers, then the Americans would make them themselves."

"We are six million... well, we are only six million." For his next film, Fournier is not even bothering knocking on

Méo (Gilles Renaud) and Flo (Denise Filiatrault) muddling through in **Je suis loin de toi Mignonne**

doors at CBC or CTV. He's going straight to ABC and NBC to look for that indispensable sure TV sale. But that doesn't prevent him from knowing all too well that if Radio-Canada (CBC) stopped showing only foreign films and made an effort to get the audience used to the local product, the government could help develop a feature industry. "But there's the CFDC, and the CBC feels the government's duty is done. I think the political factions should fight that battle before tackling the Americans."

Dream World

But Hollywood hasn't called and Claude Fournier's audience is in Quebec – he hopes, and **Mignonne** is good reason to hope. The "Establishment" with in-built experience doesn't exist either, so Fournier operates a small company with his producer lady Marie-Josée Raymond, one of Quebec's toughest producers. Rose Films will survive, but maybe not Fournier's energy.

In 22 to 25 years of work, he emerges mainly as a writer. He wrote stage plays and radio plays at a time when writers were closely involved in productions. He knew everyone. But he got bored and "branched out towards film," stopping over at the CBC and the NFB. Now, he finds it difficult to belong to a milieu, to know the actors, to see all he should see, and even more so when getting to direct is such an occasional activity.

His real pleasure is in script writing, working with others, sharing the pressures. But he knows only too well that there are no trained screenwriters in Quebec, except for other directors like Gilles Carle.

But that's dreamworld. Carle is not about to write for Fournier nor the other way around, because that would quickly wrap up Quebec's film industry. Yet, Fournier knows from experience that it takes at least six months to properly develop a film script that has any value. So it's no way to earn a living, given that "the more ambitious a script the less its chances of being made," added to the fact that nobody is willing (or able) to invest more than $10,000 in its development. So if you do two in a year and a half, allowing for a short period of incubation, you're living off a very small salary. The only way to make it worthwhile is to also collect the director's cut – and the editor's, and the cameraman's, and the producer's... Partly because of this, Claude Fournier is convinced Quebec's film industry is doomed. He's only grateful for the role he's been privileged to play – that of a skilful artisan with a good sense of humor. □

Selected Filmography
Claude Fournier

Shorts

La lutte (1960)
Nehru (1962)
Télesphore Légaré (1957)
Hearts (1968)

Features

Deux femmes en or (1969)
Les chats bottés (1971)
Alien Thunder (1973)
La pomme, la queue et les pépins (1974)
Je suis loin de toi Mignonne (1976)

8th student film fest

technique up: imagination down

by Wojtek Gwiazda

It's become obvious to even the most casual observer of the Canadian Student Film Festival that the actual technical ability to put on the screen a well exposed, focused image synced with sound – one which could appear in any movie theatre – has been achieved.

It's been achieved by eliminating the troublesome 8 and super 8 mm films from competition and leaving the festival to the moneyed 16 and 35 mm filmmaker. This has greatly reduced the badly exposed unsynced home movies festival audiences were previously forced to suffer through. As the festival has become more and more streamlined, the professional amateurs with school and Canada Council support have moved in and the festival has begun fulfilling the role its director Serge Losique has longed for – that of a "Canadian Cannes".

But in this mad rush for professionalism, the festival, which ironically enough was, according to Losique, an attempt to get away from the "filmmaker-technician" of the NFB, has ended up with just that – a lot of technically capable film technicians with, for the most part, nothing to say.

This is not only unfortunate, but considering the importance of the communications media, extremely worrisome. Because undeniably the media industry is taking an increasingly important role in our society. When unions write open letters to the public in newspapers and employers answer back in the same way; when governments use television to justify their policies and presidential candidates stake elections on TV debates, the power of the communications media becomes more and more evident. It therefore becomes important to understand not only the reasoning behind making a film but also its effect on the audience. For instance, what kind of a reality is the filmmaker presenting? Are we all affluent upper-middle-class Canadians?

Unfortunately, these questions have not been considered by the vast majority of entrants in the festival.

Caught up in their attempts to create "artistic" films, they make vague introspective personal voyages into the mind in superficial examinations of artists, homosexuals and anything else that seems filmworthy.

It seems that after years of dedicating themselves to their chosen profession, that's all they're interested in. The films are made for their own sake, in a vacuum that is left only for the necessary period of time it takes to leave some images on the celluloid. Then it is back to the world of the "filmmaker", where time and space mean nothing and films have no beginning or end because the filmmaker is concerned with the f stop and the sound sync and switching in mid-sentence from black and white footage to color.

Of course, student filmmakers work under certain obvious disadvantages that do not beset the professional. The student is at the mercy of whatever actors he can find. The same goes for the crew, the music composition and a hundred other more or less important details.

Even so, or perhaps because of these disadvantages, the student filmmakers try to ape the Hollywood masters by using every cliché travel shot, fade-in, camera angle and special effect they can remember. Instead of aiming for simple themes that are all around them in a society showing signs of decay, they retreat into horror-adventure thrillers or "deep" introspectives.

As if denying the existence of the real world, they build their own fantasy land. Here they have a free hand. Cutesy shots through tree branches of a child "discovering" the world (**Mon âme**) make one wonder if a filmmaker has to go through some honest suffering to make decent films. Documentaries like **Rick Taylor/The Frozen Moment** – on a suburban artist who paints sad paintings that don't sell because he makes people think too much, yet personally thinks life is great – leave one with a distrust of all "artists".

Undeniably, trying to break new frontiers of film technique has its positive side. But the obsession with gimmickry, trick photography, with studio-style cinematography, which is obviously being encouraged by the festival, is also destroying the youthful creativity that used to make even badly edited films worthwhile.

Instead professionalism reigns supreme with all its negative aspects. Instead of new exciting insights from young minds we have gimmicky rehashes of old themes. In the tradition that whatever is popular is fodder for the camera, this year's enlightened "artists" exploited sex and homosexuality to the limit. Hung up by not being hung up by sex, they've built their own prison of the mind.

Professionalism also puts the filmmakers in a straitjacket of technical considerations that hamper their ability to see the entire film. For instance, in one escapist film this year, **Daughter of the Vampire**, the filmmaker produced some beautifully filmed and lighted interiors that recalled those of Bergman's **Cries and Whispers.** However, he not only wasted his effort on a cheap thriller, which is per-

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haps excusable, but insults the intelligence of his audience and puts his own into question by leaving in the plot some totally impossible occurrences.

Over and over one is amazed by these filmmakers' total disregard of the real world around them. As "artists", are they not bound to have a consciousness even more developed than that of the public? Is theirs not the duty to prod, push, analyze, question?

Documentaries, the Canadian tradition built upon the work of Grierson and others of the early years, have been long buried. The "stars" of those films used to be miners, mailmen, soldiers. Today the Canadian "avant garde" that these students supposedly represent finds its truth in homosexuals, failed suburban painters and chess players. Instead of reaching for new insights, the documentaries blatantly emphasize the stereotypes.

While progressive filmmakers the world over complain of the stereotyping and constraints of the film industry, young student "artists" eagerly embrace the Hollywood mold and continue the myths that are maintained by the big industries like Dupont (United Artists) and General Motors (MGM) that financially control the film industry.

La nouvelle vendeuse
by Mario Bolduc

La nouvelle vendeuse is a film of another genre. This is a story of a Levis, Quebec, salesgirl who decides the only way she can escape her work and stay home, while all her neighbors are working, is to get pregnant.

The film is a success, such a success that it had absolutely no competition from any other film at the festival, because of its simplicity, reality and attention to details.

In a semi-documentary style using the girl's voice to explain a lot of the detail and inner thoughts that would have otherwise taken too long to get across, the film builds a reality that is reinforced by the documentary feeling. Over and over when we hear the girl explain what she does and feels, one forgets that this is fiction. On the other hand we aren't treated to the cluttered sound or unsteady camerawork of a documentary.

As the longest film of the festival (40 minutes) and one with a seemingly simple theme, it is surprising that the film, with rare exceptions, did not drag. That it did not is thanks to both the actress who plays a most sympathetic and likeable salesgirl and the filmmaker, Mario Bolduc, who very judiciously attempted to create atmosphere and understanding from the shortest amount of footage he could.

Particularly on second viewing, one sees how little footage is used to convey a ferry boat trip, a visit to a doctor, or the fact that the husband's shipbuilding plant is on strike.

Furthermore Bolduc has found a very natural way of juxtaposing humorous incidents and more serious material where neither suffer and in fact both are enhanced. By giving his characters real emotions and motivations against this backdrop, he creates very real situations.

There is, for instance, one scene where two friends at work stick a birthday present in the girl's locker. She arrives, finds the present and unwraps it; everything is very nice and natural. As soon as it's opened, one after the other the two friends rush off to work, because work is work and you're paid by the clock. It's a minor detail, but that's what makes the film believable.

This care for detail is everywhere evident. When the girl talks about the birthday dinner she's prepared, she wonders if her husband will notice the new sweater she's bought for the occasion. Here again, it's not the actual fact of the sweater but all that the thought of it implies that creates this fully developed character.

The girl's acceptance that there is a hierarchy among the employees – as she puts it, secretaries are considered superior to salesgirls because they went to college and do much more interesting work – emphasizes better than any other means could the social awareness of the girl and her relation to her work.

The naturalness of the film, particularly in the relations between the girl and her husband, again underline the capabilities of Bolduc and the actors who worked for him.

For all the down-to-earth feeling of the film, it still remains a light airy tale with pleasant memories of a happy relationship rather than a dogmatic attempt to understand the position of "a worker" or "a woman". □

The Winners

Norman McLaren Award

La nouvelle vendeuse by Mario Bolduc
Scenario, B/W, 40 m., York University

Scenario

First Prize

Blanc de mémoire – souvenir rouge by Yvan Girouard
14 m., Color, Concordia

Second Prize

Small Real Estate Deal by Melvin Stone Kennedy
B/W, 10 m., SFU Film Workshop

Documentary

First Prize

Le monument by Daniel Louis and Hélène Couture
Color, 22 m., Ryerson Polytechnical Institute

Second Prize

See How the Cat Walks by Rick Benwick
Color, 9 m. 30 s., Ryerson Polytechnical Institute

Animation

First Prize

Thought by Darcia Labrosse
Color, 4 m. 48 s., Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal

Second Prize

Hallelujah Darwin! by Robert William Gibbs
Color, 12 m., University of B.C.

Experimental

No prize

Special Jury's Prize "Entertainment"

First Prize

Ceux venus d'ailleurs by Franco Battista
Color, 20 m., Concordia, documentary

Second Prize

For Your Enjoyment... Bag Brown & His Orchestra by Jim Chohanik
Animation, Color, 3 m., Vancouver School of Art

Honorable Mention

Lady From Montreal by Andrew Adams, for its cinematography
Scenario, B/W, 24 m., Conestoga College

November 3 by George Mihalka - Rodney Gibbons, for direction of actors
Scenario, Color, 24 m., Concordia

BOOK REVIEWS

The John Ford Movie Mystery by Andrew Sarris

Cinema One series. Secker and Warburg. Hard cover or stiff paperback. 192 pages.

Considering his undoubted stature, there have been surprisingly few books on the work of director John Ford. All the more welcome, then, is Andrew Sarris's perceptive, witty, graceful study of the old movie magician. It marvellously adds to an uncrowded shelf in the film book basic library.

Sarris has been a Ford devotee for many years, unswayed by shifting critical fashion and undaunted by the paradox at the root of Ford's long and classic career. This paradox is the "mystery" of Sarris's title, which may at first glance be itself puzzling, since Ford was never known as a director of thrillers. Rather he himself once announced, in a delightfully inadequate but partially accurate self-appraisal: "My name's John Ford; I make westerns." The mysterious artistic complexity that Sarris rightly divines and deftly details is of a creative sensibility far more complex and truly humane than the once-prevalent image of Ford as all bluff and banter, Irish whimsey and Yankee gung-ho. I have always felt myself that **Rio Grande** is one of the films that most clearly shows (to those with eyes to see) Ford in his full mature wisdom, combining masculine and feminine elements, loud alarms and soft caresses. It ranges from the sweep of a cavalry charge to the delicate melody of a music box, redolent of family loyalty and marital affection under stress. Andrew Sarris keeps this Fordian balance, more duality than dichotomy, in view throughout his writing. It sometimes gets lost from view (for the book goes from film to film through Ford's career, which involves enough fascinating points and side issues to divert anyone momentarily from a theorist path) but always reappears with relevance, like a river beneath overhanging boughs.

A critic loves to nitpick but here I found only two real nits to pick. First, **The Rising of the Moon** is not in "tilted Cinemascope". Parts are memorably tilted, agreed, but 'scopic, no. Second, and more in a spirit of little-known facts about Hollywood, Henry Fonda was *not* under contract to Twentieth Century-Fox until he had to sign one in order to play the coveted role of Tom Joad in **The Grapes of Wrath.** He was initially the property of independent producer Walther Wanger and then briefly a freelance and so not really the "third-ranking Fox leading man behind Tyrone Power and Don Ameche". Had Fonda not eventually signed with Zanuck, though, it is highly likely Tom Joad would have been played by either Power (a plausible conjecture) or Ameche (the mind not only boggles, it freaks out).

Clive Denton

The House of Horror

Edited by Allen Eyles, Robert Adkinson and Nicholas Fry. Lorrimer Publishing. 128 pages. Stiff paperback. $2.25.

Lorrimer, sometimes through their Bounty Books associate, have put out several picture books with texts on general subjects of popular cinema such as *Speed, Cinema of Motion* and *Cinema of Mystery*. These are agreeable enough and make likely presents for youngsters, especially movie-minded youngsters who boast their own miniature coffee tables.

The present book is more valuable, however, in being specific. While it is replete with big, clear illustrations of monsters both prehistoric and futuristic, mad scientists, vampires, shapely slave girls and one half-naked Viking Queen, its theme is lightly scholarly. Here we find discussed and detailed the productions of Britain's Hammer Films company from pre-war beginnings (Paul Robeson, no less, and Lugosi in **The Mystery of the Marie Celeste**), through low-budget crime thrillers and domestic comedies to the era of horror and science fiction which has made Hammer a household word in the past twenty years. The information is full and seems reliable, including filmographies and interviews with Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, director Terence Fisher and executive Michael Carreras. Critically, the book is a shade too close to adulation for comfort but it's obviously written by enthusiasts, and they also serve.

Clive Denton

Clive Denton writes and broadcasts for the CBC doing film reviews for Off Stage Voices *and the* Sunday Supplement. *He is teaching film at McMaster and Toronto Universities, and writes and researches for the TVOntario program* Saturday Night at the Movies.

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FILM REVIEWS

Jean-Claude Lord's

Parlez-nous d'amour

d. Jean-Claude Lord, **sc.** Michel Tremblay, Jean-Claude Lord, **dial.** Michel Tremblay, **ph.** François Brault, **ed.** Jean-Claude Lord, Lise Thouin, **sd.** Henri Blondeau, **sd. ed.** Marcel Pothier, **cost.** Denis Sperdouklis, **l.p.** Jacques Boulanger, Benoit Girard, Claude Michaud, Monique Mercure, Manda Parent, Jean-Marie Lemieux, Roger Lebel, Bertrand Gagnon, Paul Gauthier, Denise Dubreuil, André Montmorency, Denis Drouin, Roger Garand, Lise Thouin, Danièle Roy, Pascal Desgranges, Guy L'Ecuyer, **p.** Pierre David, **p.c.** Les Productions Mutuelles Ltée., 1976, **col.** 35 mm., **running time** 127 minutes.

Jacques Boulanger as Jeannot with Véronique Béliveau in **Parlez-nous d'amour.**

The question is, can a well-made film that sincerely denounces one of the seediest aspects of contemporary culture turn against itself, and become, to some extent, an extension of what it denounces?

If that sounds a bit convoluted, blame **Parlez-nous d'amour,** Jean-Claude Lord's latest feature, currently enjoying box office success and causing quite a *scandale* throughout Quebec.

I find myself taking a tough stance vis-à-vis this film, and it seems a bit unfair, really. Especially when you compare Lord's movie with the exploitative, seventies versions of "quota quickies" being churned out in English-speaking Canada (or pseudo-Hollywood Canada) – things such as **East-End Hustle, Breaking Point, Shadow of the Hawk,** and **Death Weekend.** That, however, is another story.

But to get back to Lord's film. It *is* well-made, intelligently scripted by Quebec's leading dramaturge, Michel Tremblay, and strongly acted, especially by Jacques Boulanger, a Montreal TV idol.

Jean-Claude Lord knows how to make a movie. There is a smoothness, a flow, a point of view, and, above all, energy. Working with a small budget ($410,000), Lord nonetheless is able to fill his screen with people and with life. But not at the cost of the central characters, who still emerge and have their dramatic, or touching, moments. Drama, pathos, laughter, heart – surely these represent the kind of achievement one cannot dismiss.

And above all there is the *content,* that about which Lord, Tremblay, the critics, and everyone else are talking – the scathing denunciation, the two-fisted exposé of certain aspects of Quebec showbiz.

What few English-Canadians realize is that Quebecois show business is a phenomenon of spectacular proportions, without anything close to an equivalent on the English side. The fan magazines are all over the place, except that they are usually in cheap tabloid weekly format, and sleazier and dirtier than the old Hollywood fan mags used to be. Immensely successful, they create the myths; *i.e.* the film, TV, pop *stars.* As often as not, they are on the fringes of pornography, and some of them are downright pornographic, no holds barred.

Hand in hand with this cretinous industry goes an almost equally cretinous pop record business, and great areas of TV programming (Radio-Canada – CBC – included, believe it or not). *Their* pornography is more at the level of "respectable" sentimentality, the exploitation of the fantasies of lonely or frustrated women, most of them on the far side of forty.

Behind the scene, of course, are the pay-offs, the incipient violence, the vapid "stars", the hucksters, the producers – the whole seedy lot with their casting couches and so on. Money and sex – and, boy, does this film show us how corrupt and cynical these people are, and how exploited, ugly, and stupid are the poor women (and the odd male) who keep the whole thing viable financially!

Actually, Jean-Pierre and Michel Tremblay are going after something terribly destructive, nothing less than the Skidoo-ization of Quebec culture. Never mind the Big City with its "specialized" areas, go to any little village in Quebec. See, if there's a moviehouse, what movie is showing. Porno, of course. Listen to the concentrated insipidity of the juke boxes. Try to find a newspaper or magazine in the cesspool of pornography on the stands in the general stores. At this level, Quebec is more degraded than any other "civilized" country in the world.

In other words, Quebec has its esteemed writers, its marvelous chansonniers, its theatre, its ambitious cinema of the last 10 or 12 years – all of which are to its glory, national-

ly and internationally. But *huge* areas of the mainstream are polluted by precisely what is represented and attacked in **Parlez-nous d'amour.**

So far so good. The film has that social ethical concern. And it moves. At another level, the focus on Jacques Boulanger, the central character, is such that he begins to acquire almost tragic dimensions: he's a kind of "Alfie" or a Marcello Mastroianni, such as we saw in **La Dolce Vita** and 8½ or in some of Antonioni's films; or, closer still, he is related to those roles played by Jack Nicholson a few years back.

Somehow, though, one begins to have serious reservations: Lord's movie falls short. Symptomatic characteristics point out the big flaws, the big, gaping, missing something.

For one thing, the film – and its creators, in their interviews – demands to be taken almost literally as a documentary exposé. As a matter of fact, one is constantly tossed back and forth between the make-believe roles played on the screen, and the "real" actors playing them, since many of these same actors have public *personae* terribly close to what they are portraying.

But is it "reality"? Everything is too neat, too theatrically meticulous. And the gigantic figure of Michel Tremblay looms in the background: these are *his* creations, his *situations.* That gallery of grotesque, pitiable women is straight out of his theatre world. And the phallus obsession as well. The rhythm, too, and the tonality are his: coarseness, absurdity, vulgarity – then tenderness, softness, a pathetic human glimpse. We are smack back in the Tremblay fringe world, all right, where everyone is a helpless loser, or worse.

Except that Tremblay's strange, troubling poetry is absent. Jean-Claude Lord seems incapable of achieving any kind of artistic *cinematic* correlative for the peculiar power of Tremblay's plays at their best. He is adequate, he is in control, he is intelligent, he is slick, and he handles actors beautifully. But his cinema has no mystery, no surprises, no way of breaking through into that magic we call art. It does not sing, it has no nuances, it leaves nothing to the imagination – nor to the intelligence of the viewer. Lord communicates coarseness with coarseness, obscenity with obscenity, lack of sensitivity with lack of sensitivity, vulgar decor with vulgar decor, in a sort of uninspired one-to-one ratio of literalness.

And perhaps this is what leads to the conclusion that **Parlez-nous d'amour** is patently packaged as an "objet de consommation". In a way it comes close to having the same contempt for its audience that is exhibited in the very things it attacks. Predictable, pedestrian, with well-calculated moments appealing to the lowest common denominator (sensibility-wise and intelligence-wise), is it not ultimately a vulgar, exploitative object itself?

So the dilemma, the critic's difficult position. On the one hand, in the bad times, financially and artistically, that Canadian films are going through right now, one hates to be severe about a reasonably well-made film that has the courage to expose and excoriate one of the cancers of our culture.

On the other hand, **Parlez-nous d'amour** reinforces a way of making films, a way of manipulating film language, that confirms, strengthens, and exploits patterns which are the very basis for what it purports to be attacking. It smacks just a little too much of the old game of "épater les bourgeois".

As such, it represents a falling-off from the best work seen in Quebec in the not too distant past – in the films, say, of Michel Brault, Pierre Perrault, and, at times, of Claude Jutra, Marcel Carrière, Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, and even Gilles Carle.

I do not see in it any kind of resolution for the problems plaguing the Quebec film scene these last few years.

Marc Gervais

Gerald Mayer's

The Man Inside

d. Gerald Mayer, **sc.** Tony Sheer, **ph.** Ken Gregg, **ed.** Martin Pepler, **set dec.** John Roberts, **m.** composed & conducted by Don Gillis, **cost.** Shirley Mann, **l.p.** James Franciscus, Jacques Godin, Stefanie Powers, Donald Davis, Allan Royale, Len Birman, John Horton, **exec. p.** John T. Ross, **p.** Wilton Schiller, **p. manager** Marilyn Stonehouse, **p.c.** CBC (Canada) and International Film Distributors / NTA Canada, 1976, **color,** 16 mm., **running time** 95 min., **dist.** NTA.

The Man Inside is an efficient film, competently directed by Gerald Mayer; but it is basically uninteresting. Between the gun-slinging opening and closing scenes the film drags through a few tame and time-worn clichés. The CBC's first feature comes off as a tepid thriller.

With the mounties as subject we might have hoped for a new angle on the detective story or at least a fresh treatment of the cops. This film doesn't even try. The mounties would be hard to distinguish from L.A.'s finest.

Early in the film there is a cutaway to a picture-postcard mountie in red jacket. The meaning is clear – that viewers should identify the film's plain-clothes detectives with the old Hollywood-style mountie – but it's an awkward device that smacks of producer overcaution.

The Man Inside was made through a co-production agreement between the CBC and the American company International Film Distributors. The latter supplied, according to a CBC press release, over 40 per cent of the direct production cost, quoted at something over $200,000, in return for international distribution rights and the choice of up to three of the leads.

James Franciscus plays Rush, the RCMP undercover agent who infiltrates a Toronto narcotics ring. Franciscus is a seasoned television actor, he performs well in the film, but I wonder if the familiarity of his face serves this role and the Canadian setting of the story?

Jacques Godin, here acting in his second English-language feature (remember **The Pyx?**) is Cross, the gang member who befriends Rush and is later betrayed by him. Godin has one compelling scene on the roof of a cement factory tower when, finally realizing who Rush is, his face screws from disbelief into rage. On the whole, though, one senses an intensity about him that has yet to be tapped by a director.

Expectancy shrouds this film. We sit through two (television) hours waiting for some lick of humor or perhaps a clever gimmick. Only the final scene of this screenplay by Tony Sheer injects a modicum of intrigue into the "thriller" plot.

Aiming at the bad guys (or were they the good guys?) in **The Man Inside**

Often in films that disappoint at other levels I can at least enjoy the scenery. I suspect, though I don't know the city well, that Toronto could have provided a more lively and personal backdrop to the events of the movie.

Surely the kind of urban anonymity that this film projects, though possibly intended to increase its foreign sales potential, works against the film.

(A late arrival at Cannes this year, the film reportedly sold poorly.)

The Man Inside was screened nationally on CBC-TV September 25th. The film is a crystalline example of one direction in television programming the CBC could pursue... a direction thoroughly mapped out by the powerful American networks.

That **The Man Inside** was made at all indicates the CBC Drama Department, under its head John Hirsch, is grappling with the awesome task of competing with big-budget American TV and particularly with the flood of old and new American feature films. Though in one sense this CBC feature is not a particularly ambitious beginning, it is a realistic one.

The need for some relief to the regular Saturday evening Canadian content sing-song programming is not the least of reasons why the CBC should try again.

Joan Irving

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